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TOPS News

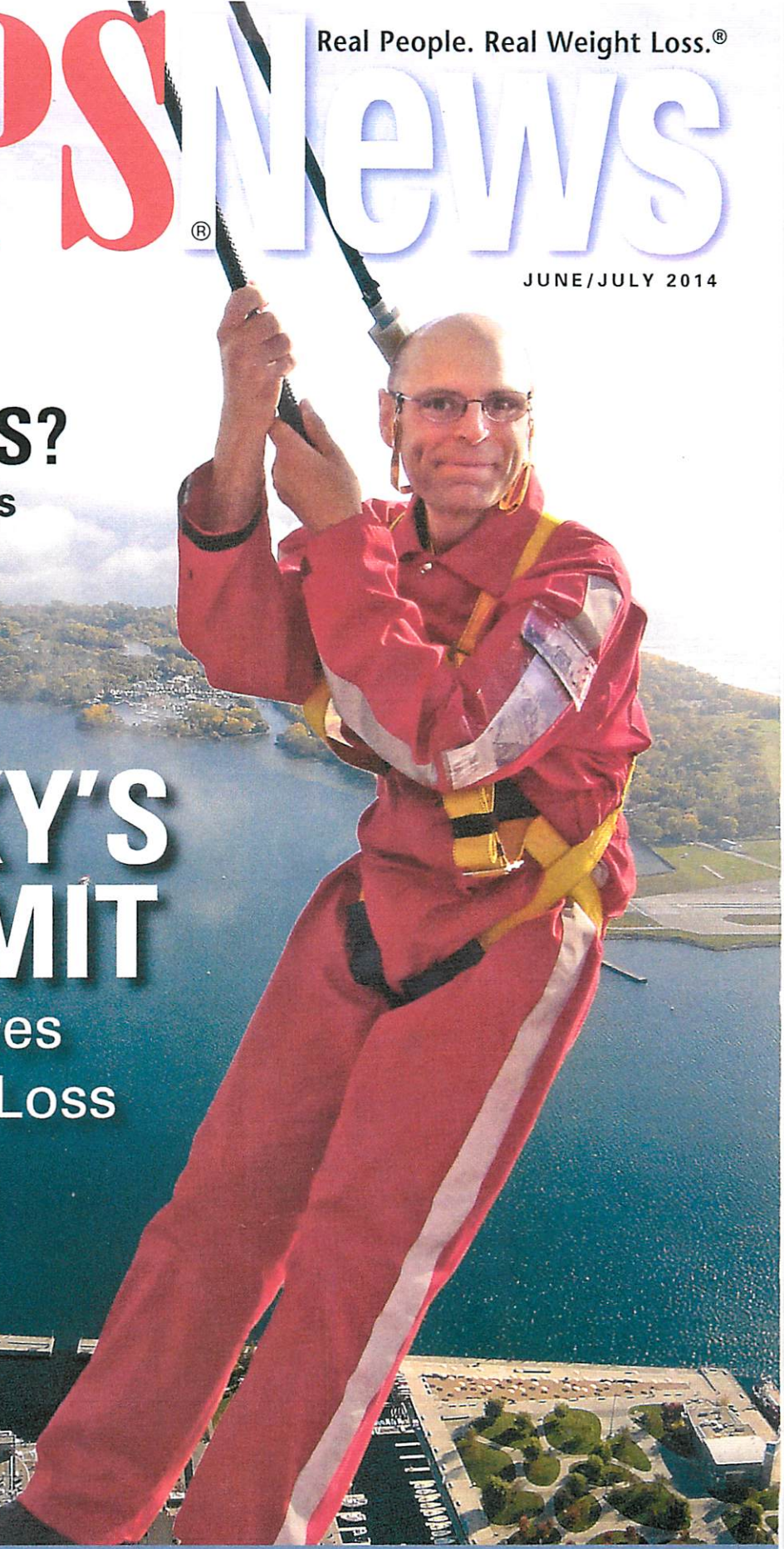
Real People. Real Weight Loss.®

JUNE/JULY 2014

**On a Quest
for SUCCESS?**
Find Your Compass

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Our Adventures
After Weight Loss



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TOPS MEMBERSHIP NO.

RENEWAL DUE

We're here for you. Your Coordinator is:



Real People. Real Weight Loss.®

After years of yo-yo dieting, Heather Gum learned to control portions and fill up on fruits, vegetables and lean protein. That—plus the accountability of weekly weigh-ins—is how she **lost more than 163 pounds** with TOPS. Now she enjoys canoeing, kayaking and snow skiing. “We are in control of our destination and how fast or slow we get there,” she says. “You’ll find inner strength on your own pathway to good health.”

Read Heather’s full story on page 14.

Try TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) today. Your first meeting is free. Each chapter is different, so you can visit more than one before deciding to join. With thousands of chapters across the U.S. and Canada, you can find the right one for you.

For a meeting near you:

www.tops.org
800-932-8677



Our member testimonials are unpaid and unsolicited.

EMBRACING HEALTHY CHANGE

After Pledging to
Lead a Better Life for Real,
a Mom Loses Weight for Good



By Kristin Sutter

Heather Gum's litmus test for weight-loss success starts and ends with her two daughters. Told by a doctor that she was "morbidly obese" prior to getting married, Heather had a hard time getting pregnant due to weight-related issues. By the time her daughters were in school, Heather realized she wasn't able to be as involved in their activities as other parents were.

"I was always the one taking pictures, not in the pictures," she says. When her oldest daughter's Girl Scout troop talked about taking a trip to Europe in a couple of years, Heather knew she wouldn't fit on the plane.

Her job working with kids added to the emotional toll. "4-H meant the world to me when I

was young," Heather says. So she was excited to work for the program when her daughters were old enough to participate.

As a 4-H teacher, Heather leads about 800 students every month through the 4-H pledge,

which includes the “H” for health and a commitment to better living.

“I can’t imagine what kids were thinking of my physical condition, standing there pledging my health,” she says, adding that she wasn’t setting a good example. “I knew something had to be done.”

Tipping the Scales in Her Favor

Heather had been a member of TOPS TN 0616 Murfreesboro for several years and tried different weight-loss techniques. Encouraged by some friends who’d successfully lost weight following an individualized nutrition counseling program at a weight-loss center near her home, Heather decided to give it a try.

The program the center designed for Heather, along with the support from her TOPS chapter, has worked well for her. By focusing on foods that work best for her body and eating proper portions, Heather lost more than 163 pounds and became the 2012 TOPS Tennessee Queen.

Determining portions is simple, convenient and, ultimately, sustainable for Heather. “I weigh everything—you know how easy that is?” she says, laughing. “All I have to do is put food on a scale, match a little number and that’s what I eat—and that’s where I stop.”

Heather’s food scales are a staple in her kitchen, and they also travel with her, even into restaurants.

Sharing Her Weight-Loss Story

What her body needs has been an essential point of focus for Heather. She started blogging at the beginning of her journey in 2011 to help herself and others sort through the many aspects affecting her health.

She also created a Facebook page, where she shares her own recipes, healthy tips and other snippets of inspiration.

Early on, she realized that she’s the caretaker of her body, so she’s careful to feed it what it needs to keep her going. “My body doesn’t make me who I am as a person,” she says. “It makes me a more capable person.”

Being capable has also fueled Heather. Knowing that her blog and Facebook followers were inspired by her new choices has helped her keep striving to connect, tell her story and advocate for others struggling with weight loss.

Heather felt motivated by TOPS Medical Editor Nick Yphantides, MD, MPH, and his presentation at International Recognition Days in San Diego. As an International Division Winner, she thought, “I need to be up there telling my story!” She knows how powerful knowledge about weight loss can be coming from someone who’s been there. “I have walked in those extra-wide shoes,” she says.

Shedding Her Old Skin

Losing all that weight gave her another challenge she never expected: several pounds

By focusing on foods that work best for her body, Heather lost more than 163 pounds.



At Tennessee’s State Recognition Days in April 2013, Heather stepped into the same pair of red pants she wore in her “before” photo—with plenty of room to spare!

Heather's Apple Pie Omelet

4 oz. apples, sliced or diced 2 egg whites
1 t. cinnamon cooking spray
1 T. sweetener (I use stevia) 1 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (or cheese of choice)

1. Place apples, cinnamon and sweetener in a skillet on medium-low heat. Cover and allow apples to cook till tender, turning as needed. Set aside.
2. Meanwhile, in a bowl, beat egg whites till stiff (not just fluffy). Spray a clean nonstick skillet, and spread out egg whites. Cover, and cook on medium low.
3. Sprinkle most of the cheese on top of egg whites. Once set, flip so cheese faces down in skillet. The cheese will continue to melt and then crisp.
4. Spread apples onto omelet, adding remaining cheese. When cheese is cooked, fold omelet over onto plate.

Servings: 1. **Per serving:** 225 calories (82 from fat), 10 g total fat (6 g saturated fat), 29 mg cholesterol, 220 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 12 g sugar, 14 g protein.

Exchanges: 1 fruit, 2 meat, 2 fat.

Additional Ideas:

- Add Walden Farms calorie-free apple butter with apples inside the omelet.
- Pour a little Walden Farms caramel syrup on top. (Also zero calories.)
- Add a little cayenne to apples for some zing.
- Use 1 oz. dehydrated cinnamon apples.

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ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

of debilitating excess skin.

Heather says she'd like to be "the face of the once-obese," so she can advocate for corrective surgery. She is working toward making excess skin removal financially accessible. "It's not for vanity, it's for functionality," she says.

For her, the skin was as debilitating mentally as the weight was physically. She was carrying about 30 pounds of excess skin. Every day for 18 months, she girdled her body from elbow to knee to prevent rashes and back pain.

Heather feels fortunate that the TV show *The Doctors* chose to share her story and perform the plastic surgery she needed. She braved showing her post-weight-loss body for the show to

help educate viewers on the issue.

Months later, Heather's body is still healing from the surgery, and she's enjoying her new form. She says she feels like she's been born again with a chance to live in a new body.

And she loves being able to swap clothes with her daughters. "They have both gone to school wearing my shirts," Heather says. "That in itself is just incredible." Inspired by her daughters all along, it's not a bad way to measure success. ■



Hear Heather in her own words. Go to the Members Area of www.tops.org and click "Videos."



A writer, editor and traveling English teacher, Kristin Sutter loves to meet interesting people and share their stories. She has written about artists, architects, landscapers, teachers and yoga lovers. She is particularly interested in wellness and plans to learn to teach yoga for trauma recovery.