

AMBER DWYER SUCCESS STORY
Division 6 – 1st Place

All my life I had been the kid to be made fun of. I was always the overweight girl in my class. In my 8th grade year, I wanted to be known as the girl who did something with her life. I wanted people to see me as I was not the biggest one in the class or who could eat the most Twinkies without throwing up first. I joined TOPS on August 27, 2007. I thought oh I am not going to fit in here – I'm just a kid. The TOPS members opened up with loving arms and said welcome. I had never felt this way before about anything! At first I laid back watched what was going on and finally I got involved.

I would go to meetings and they would have different things to do and various recipes to share. I would take them home and not do any thing with them because I thought they wouldn't help me. I would come to TOPS and lose 1/4 to 3/4 lb. of weight every other week. I wasn't satisfied so I asked how I could lose more. They started giving me recipes and asked what I like to eat. Then we did menus and would really track how much I was eating and I said to myself, "wow that's a lot of food."

I started cutting my portions down, I didn't change what I was eating Just cut portions down. I would go to TOPS and see that I was still only losing 1/4 to 3/4 lbs every other week. I got more recipes from my TOPS Members and they told me the foods that worked for them and the foods that might work for me. I did this and I noticed I was losing a 1/2 to 1 lb. every week. I thought to myself this is good but I still didn't feel healthy about myself. I was encouraged by my friends, family and TOPS members to join a sport or exercise a little by walking each week. I begin walking but not seeing results that I wanted. I started to play softball. I was exercising every day for 2-3 hours and was losing 1 to 2 lbs. every week. I then took up golf. Golf was hard walking up all those hills with your clubs on your back but I found it was fun. I then went to basketball --- lots of running and I mean lots of running, but my coach told me to take it at my pace and I would eventually catch up with the other girls. By the end of the season, I was only missing my sprints by 5 seconds from the other girls. Prior to that I was 30-40 seconds behind the girls. I was losing inches before I begin losing weight. My body fat then turned to muscle and I saw myself as a whole new person.

I got caught up with everything I was doing and I stopped going to TOPS for a week and then I would go and miss a week – it became an off and on thing! Little by little I was putting on more and more weight. I starting going to weight room at school for 2-3 hours a day so that I could keep up with my exercise.

I still go to TOPS every week as well as working out every day. I realize TOPS is taking off pounds sensibly but it's facing the scale every week and telling your peers that you gained.

That's why its easy to do your exercise at home and step on scale and say oh I gained again. When you're in front of your peers and say you gained, it's a whole different experience and you have to face the scale I'm going to lose weight not for that boy, not for my friends, but for me!

**Amber Dwyer
IN 1235, Whiting**