

# Southern Iowa Mayor Issues Life-Changing Challenge to His Community

OSCEOLA, Iowa, May 3, 2017 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – How often are you asked, “How far would you go for what you need?” Would you ever answer, “Across the entire state?” That’s exactly what Thomas Kedley, Mayor of Osceola in Southern Iowa, has challenged himself to do through Operation Recreation.



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A run across the entire state of Iowa certainly takes serious commitment, but, true leadership also takes commitment – and Mayor Kedley understands that. These days, it’s not just the duties as Mayor, coach, educator, and new father that Kedley focuses on, but how to harness the success of his own personal evolution from overweight teenager to a healthy, passionate leader of a growing community that finds itself in desperate need of its own health and wellness guidance.

Osceola, Iowa is a sleepy manufacturing city in the heart of south central Iowa. The people work hard and, as Mayor, Kedley wants to see their hard work pay off. In 2016, Clarke County Iowa, of which Osceola is the county seat, was ranked 98th out of all 99 counties in Iowa for health and wellness. This news, received shortly after his election, shook Mayor Kedley to the core – literally.

“Growing up as an overweight kid in Iowa, I know the struggles families face when it comes to the availability of health and wellness options,” Kedley

stated. "If it weren't for the local Rec Center where I grew up, who knows where my life would be today."

Tipping the scales at over 300 pounds by age 17, young Thomas Kedley had to cut weight to wrestle as a heavyweight in high school. His blood pressure was equal to that of people twice his age and his knowledge of nutritional values was based on what he received through subsidized school lunches and quick meals at home.

Once Thomas had a public facility to go to on a regular basis, and through the support and education from around his community, he started his path to wellness. While it didn't happen overnight, Mayor Kedley now works daily on his health and, at almost half his heaviest weight, considers his life saved and the best it has ever been.

Elected in 2015, one of the first items Mayor Kedley had on his agenda was the development of a new Recreation Center for the City of Osceola. Currently without public fitness facilities, the community is forced to share time and space with the middle school, the high school and their sports teams. This, for a growing community, has become quite a challenge and consequently a detriment to the school's aging facilities.

"I understand the challenges working families face when it comes to being healthy," said Kedley. "Not everyone is able to join a club, hire a personal trainer, or participate in organized sports. That's why we need to provide low-cost, year-round public access to the building blocks of good health and an improved quality of life."

Moving quickly on his plan, Kedley, his wife Becca and other leaders in the community established Operation Recreation, a non-profit dedicated to raising funds needed to build a recreation center capable of supporting the thriving community. It's the team's goal to have funding enough to break ground and start development as soon as 2018 with council approval.

"That's where the challenge developed," said Kedley. "To get shovels in the ground on a timeline this community needs, my goal is for Operation Recreation to raise over \$250,000 by the end of the summer. If we can do it, I'll run the entire state of Iowa, from the Minnesota border to the Missouri border, to show my gratitude."

While Kedley knows he can count on the dedication to the Rec Center from his friends and family, his associates, and those throughout the community, his hope is also to raise awareness for health and wellness across the state of Iowa. From townships to cities around the state, Kedley knows the challenge rural Iowa faces keeping health and wellness as a priority mindset.

By issuing this life-changing challenge, he hopes his personal evolution and success will impact and motivate others to do the same.

To donate to Operation Recreation, go to <http://www.OperationRecreation.org> or you can contact Mayor Thomas Kedley directly at (563) 249-1330, email him at [kedleyt@gmail.com](mailto:kedleyt@gmail.com).

For additional information on Operation Recreation or the Osceola rec center program, you can contact Mayor Kedley or Ty Wheeler, Osceola City Administrator at: Osceola City Hall, 115 N Fillmore St, Osceola, IA 50213, phone: 641-342-2377 or email [twheeler@osceolaia.net](mailto:twheeler@osceolaia.net)

\*PHOTO for media: [Send2Press.com/wire/images/17-0503s2p-Thomas-Kedley-300dpi.jpg](http://Send2Press.com/wire/images/17-0503s2p-Thomas-Kedley-300dpi.jpg)

\*Photo Caption: As a high school senior, Kedley weighed in at over 300 LBS. His commitment to a healthy future for Osceola stems from personal experience.