

## **Joshua Kennison, Paralympic Medalist, to Speak at Lewiston-Auburn's "Food For Thought"**



Josh is an amazing young man who has achieved outstanding physical goals in his young life. His story will move and touch you with his candor; his never-give-up attitude, his "joie de vivre," and his sense of humor. This program is cordially open to the public. Early reservations are encouraged as a full house is expected.

Josh was born in 1989, a congenital quadrilateral amputee. His parents, Louanne Rainey and Jeff Kennison, decided from the beginning that he would be raised no differently than any other child. He started public school at age 5, going mainstream. He did receive help, one-on-one, with speech and occupational therapy.

As he grew older, his forte was in sports, soccer and track being his favorites. With the aid of prosthetics and orthotics, Josh competed in high school sports and graduated from Oxford High School. He went on to college, but soon realized, academics was not for him and returned home. He had the dream of being on the college soccer team and turning pro. He was at loose ends when he came home and wondered what he would do with his life.

In 2008 he learned about the U.S. Paralympics Team. It became his focus and enriched his life. He set a goal to make the team in 2012 or 2016 and he trained vigorously. He made the team! Josh finished third in the 100 meter dash on July 23 last year, winning a Bronze medal at the International Paralympics Committee Athletics World Championship in Lyons, France!

In 2010, Josh competed in the 11th Annual UCO Endeavor Games in Oklahoma City against individuals with limb loss from around the U. S. He won three Gold Medals, one in 200 meter, one in high jump, and one in long jump, and a Silver Medal in the 100 meter.

Josh also competed in the U.S. National Paralympics Track Meet in 2010 and won a Silver Medal in the long jump. He was invited to attend the Walt Disney Invitational where he recorded his fastest time in the 100 meter at 11.7 seconds, a personal best.

In addition to training five days weekly for the Paralympics, Josh is Head Coach for the girls' soccer team at Oxford Middle School. He also does public speaking engagements. He has worked as a counselor at Camp No Limits in Rome Maine, an organization he has been involved in since 2005. Josh also works with the Never Say Never Foundation to provide support for amputees and is a recipient of the 2010 Amway Hero Award.

Josh surprises people when he tells them he drives a car. He has lived on his own since he was 18 and without a caretaker. He has received financial support from groups such as Norway Savings Bank, the Florida-based Never Say Never Foundation and the U.S. Paralympics. He is now looking forward to the 2015 World Championships and the Paralympics, hopefully becoming the U.S. fastest sprinter in his class.

Senior College, now in its 15th year, presents the monthly 11:30 luncheon program in the Function Room 170 at USM LAC. The cost, which includes lunch, is \$7 with advance reservation or \$8 at the door. Reservations must be made by noon on Thursday, February 13, by calling 753-6510. Any late callers will be considered "at the door."

*submitted by* – Rachel Morin, Lewiston-Auburn