

Union Restaurant's Executive Chef Josh Berry took time from his very busy schedule to talk with 7th and 8th grade Lincoln students in Christel Driscoll's Sustainability Science Class this past Wednesday. Chef Josh strongly believes that the food he prepares comes from local sources and is sustainably grown, raised or fished. His appearance on a local TV segment for Portland's Harvest on the Harbor is how Christel learned of Chef Josh and his philosophy, which strongly relates to the content of her course.

Chef Josh spoke with students about his academic and career path in becoming a chef and how he circled back to Maine to become the Executive Chef at Union. He talked about his experiences in culinary school and how his apprenticeship taught him a valuable life lesson of having time, patience, and perseverance in everything he does. Students learned of his abroad studies in Switzerland where he shared a story about experiencing humility and learning the value of being humble, even though he had received top awards and accolades. "Be humble even when you've learned a lot. Find opportunities to always learn more from others."

The presentation also included why having a relationship with farmers is important to Chef Josh. He shared that knowing the farmers yields the best and freshest produce for the restaurant. Another important reason for buying from local farmers, producers and fisheries is to reduce carbon emissions. Union does not serve asparagus right now because it's not in season here in Maine. Asparagus currently sold in stores comes from Central and South America. He challenged students to eat local and seasonally at home. "We don't eat corn on the cob after the summer season, so why don't we do this with other fruits and vegetables?"

Concepts from Chef Josh's presentation have been connected with another presenter to the class from 350 Maine, a local grassroots organization dedicated to empowering youth in the right to a stable climate.

\*\*Pictures: Chef Josh speaking to students, Chef Josh circulating around groups of students during an activity of designing menus, student Patty McKenzie looking through Chef Josh's collection of dishes he prepared during his studies.