

The name "JOSH KINNEY" is written in a stylized, handwritten font. The letters are black and have a slightly rough, ink-like texture. The "J" and "K" are particularly prominent, with long, sweeping strokes.

The latest star to come out of Alabama isn't a football legend. It's Gardendale native Josh Kinney, whose songs mix the twang of modern country music with the beat-heavy bounce of contemporary pop. Kinney began writing songs at home, in a house filled with nine children, three of which were adopted through foster care and two hard-working parents. It was hard to find a quiet place to work but that didn't stop him from strumming each new song on the acoustic guitar he received as a Christmas present at 14 years old. A lifelong music fan, he didn't have to look far for inspiration, taking his cues from old-school icons like George Strait and 21st century country-pop hitmakers like Florida Georgia Line and Jason Aldean.

The hard work paid off, and a 15-year-old Josh eventually emerged from one of his songwriting sessions with an upbeat track called "Ocean." He saved up his money for an entire summer, then forked over \$800 to record the track with producer Johnathan Hornsby. Released independently less than two years later, "Ocean" earned him a national audience, as well as a contract with the Los Angeles-based record label Birmingham Entertainment.

"I'm all about spreading a positive vibe," says Kinney, whose songs tell universal stories about old flames, new relationships, and the thrill of leaving behind the city lights for the wide-open freedom of the countryside. "I'm trying to get away from that darkness and spread a whole new type of energy — an energy that helps people feel good and forget about everything else."

He's a country star for the fans whose musical tastes are all-encompassing, influenced by genre-bending playlists and the ever-widening range of contemporary country music. With more than one million digital streams, that story is gaining popularity fast... and Josh is already hard at work on the next chapter.