

# A Special Olympian of some renown

**Flower Mound: Successful athletic career followed by giving back to organization**

By **PATTI PFEIFFER**  
Special Contributor

Jonathan Blackmon strolls down the driveway, checks his wristwatch, then runs a half block, turns and strides the same distance in the opposite direction.

For this 27-year-old Flower Mound resident, these weekly sprints are all about preparation, timing and training for upcoming competitions. He sees these competitions as opportunities to retain titles and add more medals to his mounting collection, which includes Olympic gold, silver and bronze.

Having competed around the nation in various sports, such as golf, soccer and track, Mr. Blackmon is an accomplished Special Olympics athlete, though his need for speed cost him basketball.

"He's too fast on the court," said Mr. Blackmon's mother, Cheryl Blackmon.

Mr. Blackmon was 3 when his parents learned that their only child was developmentally delayed. But the diagnosis didn't stop him.

This gifted athlete ran his first race at age 7, winning the 100-yard dash.

During the 1999 Special Olympics World Games in Raleigh, N.C., his speed propelled him to a bronze medal finish in the 5,000 meters and a 1,500-meter fourth-place finish for Team USA. He competed in the one-, two- and three-mile runs during the 2006 Special Olympics Games and won two silvers and one bronze.

"He was the only person to run in all three events," Ms. Blackmon proudly adds.



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**Jonathan Blackmon and his mother, Cheryl, of Flower Mound look over some mementos from his long and successful Special Olympics career. He's turned his attention to Special Olympics outreach and leadership.**

The Lewisville High School graduate has traveled to places many people only dream of visiting. His experiences include carrying the Special Olympics torch in Ireland and wooing crowds with his speeches in Switzerland, Italy and Belgium. He's also met several dignitaries, including Prince Albert, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Texas Gov. Rick Perry.

Now that Mr. Blackmon is older, his focus has shifted from ath-

letic competition to outreach and leadership roles.

"He loves to speak about Special Olympics," his mother said.

That passion is one reason Mr. Blackmon was selected as one of seven Texas delegates to travel to Washington, D.C., this week. He and Allen resident Stacey Johnson are among the Special Olympians around the nation who will spend Tuesday on Capitol Hill meeting with state representatives to educate them, gain sup-

port and lobby for funding.

"This is an amazing opportunity for our athletes to share information about how Special Olympics Texas positively impacts their lives as well other children and adults with intellectual disabilities," Texas Special Olympics spokeswoman Kelly Coffey said. "We're all very excited about this trip."

*Patti Pfeiffer is a Flower Mound freelance writer.*

