

*...and the winner is...*

*Well maybe he didn't win but he's a winner in our eyes.*

Anson's road has taken him many places: foster homes, group homes, lock down facilities, and more. But along the way music has always had an important place in his life and has helped him to get to where he is. Anson has just graduated from the Child & Family Service Kona Therapeutic Group Home in Kailua-Kona and was one of thirty finalists in a statewide musical contest, The Brown Bags to Stardom Contest. He received a VIP pass (which only a few finalists were given) to the finals in Honolulu. Although he wasn't successful in winning the final competition, he has already had great success in changing his life.

Anson grew up around music. His grandfather was pastor of a church where music was a significant part of the service. Anson started teaching himself to play ukulele and drums when he was nine years old. Along the way he has also taught himself bass, piano, guitar, and harmonica. As he got older, he

started putting words and music together to write his own songs.

Anson's problem was that he felt that many people in his life weren't trustworthy and that he had to fight for all that he got. He ended up living in foster care and was moved frequently from family to family. Life was becoming a marathon test of survival for him, with anger, fighting and distrust being his main tools of survival. Fighting (he was good at it), especially when you win, is very intoxicating. Anson almost always won. He's fairly large and when the anger in him exploded the result was devastating.

Inside him there was a struggle going on between the anger and the music. The more he concentrated on his music, the more he realized that it was his way to express all the emotions that he otherwise couldn't. Music became Anson's place of refuge. Many times when he would be angry, lonely, or discouraged he would turn to his music for solace.



**Anson, a successful graduate of the program**

With help and encouragement from such people as Child & Family Service staff at the Kona Therapeutic Group Home, Anson has been able to start trusting and believing in people again. He is using the emotions he feels to write powerful music about the struggles of life. "Oh! Jah Jah," is one such song. This is the song that propelled him into the finals of the Brown Bag contest. He's a living example of an expression he uses frequently, "No matter how bad things have been, you can turn it around."

## THERAPEUTIC GROUP HOMES

The Child & Family Service Therapeutic Group Home Programs provide an intensive system of support, sanctuary, skills training, counseling and clinical services for youth who are unable to live with their own families.

Youth are able to live in the community and are able to participate in family, school and community activities. Staff provide 24 hour supervision, which may be decreased as a youth is prepared for discharge.

The programs also offer assistance to the family in resolving problems that necessitated the youth's placement. The youth is prepared for discharge and reintegration into the family, when appropriate, or other less restrictive setting.

Our Therapeutic Group Homes are found in Kailua-Kona, Waipahu and Windward Oahu.

## Qualifying children must be:

- Identified as having special issues or needs
- Ages 3-18
- Referred by Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division
- Posing no imminent threat to others
- Not acutely psychotic or severely developmentally disabled

THERE ARE NO FEES CHARGED