

He and his other siblings endured neglect and abuse from their mother, and it was tougher on Damien because of his cerebral palsy.

Damien remembers that his mother had a bed of her own while he slept on the floor.

"I saw things that were so traumatic," he says, "things done to my siblings and to me. I went through every type of abuse. I felt so trapped."

He remembers being locked in the bathroom and sitting in the bathtub, considering turning on the water and ending his life.

During his darkest time as a child, Damien asked himself, "When is this going to have a happy ending?"

Now, Damien feels like his happy ending has begun. For the past four years, he was a foster child of Delores and Shelton Blount. Although he's 21 now, he continues to live with them through the Community Training Home program in South Carolina.

Damien says he has a connection with Delores that he never had with his own mother, and he feels blessed and honored to be part of the Blount family.

When she and her husband met Damien, Delores said, "We fell in love with him."

Damien is attending community college now, getting some prerequisites under his belt with the hopes of attending a four-year-college and major in the fine arts.

He'd love to act, to help change the way people with cerebral palsy are viewed. "When I'm acting, I don't have CP," he says.

He sees a future for himself. He wants to live independently after he finishes college and gets a job, and he's thankful for the Lutheran Services Carolinas foster care program for helping him pursue his dreams.

"I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the foster care system," he says. "It changed my life.

"I am worth something," he says, with a smile that would light up a stadium. "I am loved."