—Civilian Review Board

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police department, but it has little bite.

The problem lies in its lack of enforcement powers, and its call for the police department to investigate itself. Many feel this order does little in the way of an effort to examine problems objectively.

At the present time, the existing group which handles such matters, the Complaint Evaluation Board into complaints filed, but has limited power due to the fact the commissioner has final say in dispensing any disciplinary action to an officer.

"Constituents have recently come to us with complaints of mistreatment by the police department, most of which have come from the city's Western district.

"The complaints have led to the constituents to suggest the creation of a civilian review board," stated City Councilwoman Sheila Dixon.

Dixon has drawn a resolution introducing legislation to create a Civilian Review Board to handle these matters. The problem with most of the boards created, is a lack of enforcement powers.

That problem may be on its way to a quick solution finally. Dixon's bill allows for a board which can enact decisions with force.

Reviewing police actions (arrests, any acts of violence and excessive force), knowledge of department rules and regulations, and the power to subpoena are its main thrust.

"We have looked at civilian review boards in other city's, and there are mixed stories in how this is working. In some places, the program is working fine, but in areas like Washington D.C. there is a backup of five years."

The bill also calls for neighborhood involvement in creating a more harmonious relationship between residents and police, as well as providing a means for the department to coordinate its activities with the community.

Compensating victims of police violence is another major concern, and this bill introduces a provision for it, although it gives no specific direction of how this would be accomplished, Dixon feels that the state would have to bear the responsibility.

The resolution will be introduced into the General Assembly in the 1990 session.

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The Afro-American Section B

METRO PROFILE

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Saturday, July 29, 1989

The children of Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

HALLS OF CARING

By Charles H. Brown
AFRO Staff Writer

Adversity and illness were always considered the unfortunate inheritance of the elderly; extended hospital stays, constant medical attention and the high cost of care, the ironic rewards of longevity. The same, however, is part of the day to day experience of the children of Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital.

We all know children are supposed to experience, learn and grow and have fun doing it. So do the staff of Mt. Washington.

Opened in 1922 as the Happy Hills Convalescent Home for Children, Mt. Washington sustained itself by providing care to children suffering from rheumatic heart disease and has since grown to a state of the art facility catering to infants through post-adolescents, in need of long term rehabilitation and training.

Children from all over Maryland as well as neighboring states occupy the 84 beds of a new facility built on the Northwest Baltimore grounds of the 1800's mansion, that has been the hospital's home for nearly 60 years.

There are no groans of agony or moans of misfortune echoing through the hospitals halls, where the cold grays and whites of medical care are colored by the innocence of childhood and the warmth of a professional, but playful staff.

But for many, the transition from the trappings of home, the attention of friends and relatives to the unfamiliar surroundings of the wards can be unsettling. They may not see the warm colors, the murals, and the caring of the staff, they may be temporarily blinded by the bustle and the around the clock activity of the staff, the blinking lights and strobing displays of equipment and the absence of a father's smile and a mother striving to hold back the tears of uncertainty.

One such patient was four year old Thomas White.

* * * * *

Struck by an out of control motorist in 1988 while returning home from his grandmother's home, "Tommy" was snatched from his mother's hand, dragged half a block and pinned beneath the car in the middle of McCulloh Street.

Left with no feeling or movement from the neck down, Tommy spent two months at John Hopkins before being moved to Mt. Washington for training and rehabilitation programs coming to grips with a world that was once his playground but had suddenly become filled with barriers - barriers as inaccessible as playground equipment and as difficult as a sidewalk curb without a wheelchair access ramp.

But a six year old can only take so many barriers and then his spirit calls.

"Tommy still likes to go out and play but right now, he only goes out at night when the temperature is cooler," said Monica White. "He only goes out during the day to get somewhere and we have to put him on oxygen as soon as we get there."

Tommy wasn't the only one who required training. Tommy's mother, Monica White, made an almost daily trek to Mt. Washington from the family's home in the Bruce Manor Apts. on Eutaw St.

At Mt. Washington families aren't allowed to sit by helpless wondering what will become of their loved ones, instead they are trained to respond to a new set of needs and as in the case of Tommy White, to help their child to raise himself all over again.

For the length of Tommy's stay Monica White became a student. She learned diet, prescription application, operation of the oxygen tanks and how to operate Tommy's specialized wheelchair, known as a sip and puff wheelchair, which allows Tommy to move the chair back and forth and change direction by alternately blowing on an air tube.

Tommy celebrated his fifth birthday at Mt. Washington and if anyone doubts that the children at Mt. Washington are children in the truest sense the proof along with the birthday cake was smattered across the laughing faces of both the guest and the resident children at Tommy's party.

"It was a drag because I wanted him at home but he enjoyed it," said White.

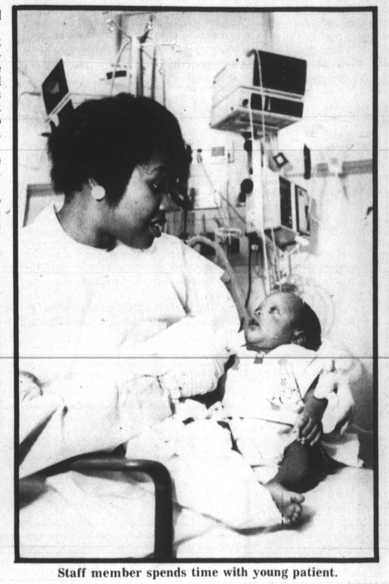
* * * * *

But for others as it was finally true for Tommy, the time comes to say goodbye to the hospital. On that day there are no sighs of relief, no "good riddance, I'm glad that's over with" goodbyes. Having never been through it, most people will never understand the attachments and friendships that develop at Mt. Washington. But there are adult parallels:

Joining with a former coworker in one last backward glance at a silent steel mill or friends limping home from war.

And going home, bottom line, is the aim of Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital. But going home with a level of hope and confidence that may not have otherwise existed.

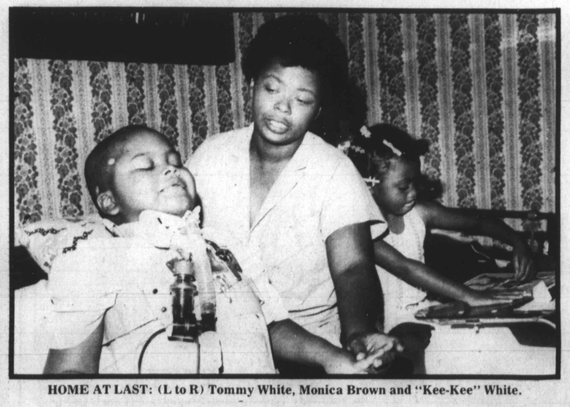
"Our goal is to try to renormalize family life again as much as is possible, said Patricia Thompson, L.C.S.W., director of social work at Mt. Washington. "This isn't home, but it's home until the child is reunited with the family."



Staff member spends time with young patient.

Kasey Lewis goes through excercises with his therapist.

Paul Coates discusses a dieting plan with counselor Patricia Thompson



HOME AT LAST: (L to R) Tommy White, Monica Brown and "Kee-Kee" White.

(AFRO Photos by Ricardo Gray)

Derek Nolie surrounded by Mt. Washington Staff.