

Disabled boy drowns in pool

A happy weekend outing took a tragic turn yesterday afternoon when a 13-year-old Willowbrook State School patient jumped into a backyard swimming pool and drowned.

Craig Lewis, a wheelchair patient at the institution for the retarded, was pronounced dead at St. Vincent's Medical Center where he was rushed by ambulance shortly before 3 p.m.

According to Miss Mary Kelly, chief of developmental services at Willowbrook, the youngster was among a group of 20 patients with similar disabilities who were taken on the excursion to the Travis home of Mrs. Mary Krawczyk by a team of six Willowbrook employees.

The employees picked up the kids at 10:45 in the morning

and drove them to Mrs. Krawczyk's home for a barbecue and swim. About an hour after lunch the employees began taking the children — one by one — for a dip in the pool," Miss Kelly explained.

According to Miss Kelly, Lewis had had his turn in the water and was placed at the side of the pool by an employee who warned him to wait there until he could swim again.

"Apparently," Miss Kelly said, "he got impatient and just pushed himself back into the pool on his own."

One of the attendants, Rita Allen, jumped in immediately to rescue the child, Miss Kelly said, but once out of the water he began choking and vomiting. Attempts at artificial respiration failed.