

Willowbrook patient, lost since Wednesday, rescued from air shaft

A 23-year-old Willowbrook Developmental Center patient who had been missing since Wednesday evening was found trapped in a small air shaft between the outer and inner wall of his building yesterday morning and later rescued by police.

The patient, Gregory Leviton, was hospitalized with extensive cuts and bruises in the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital, Clifton, and was listed in satisfactory condition.

It took nearly a dozen police and emergency services officers two hours to free the trapped man after a ward attendant heard the man from behind the wall on the first floor of Building 8.

Leviton, who was reported missing since 8:45 p.m. Wednesday, had apparently climbed a ladder through an open door in the ceiling and then crawled through the attic space to the 21-inch-by-12-inch air shaft between the building's outer and inner walls.

Police said Leviton then either fell or

slid down the shaft to a point near the first-floor landing. Emergency Services police were called to assist in the rescue shortly after the first units arrived. Police Officers Richard Doyle and William Dailey used a pneumatic jackhammer to remove sections of the concrete wall between the rescuers and the trapped man.

Police said Leviton was unclothed and apparently suffering from exposure when they reached him, but he was conscious. "He didn't say anything, at least not to us," said one police officer on the scene. "But evidently he'd been there all night."

Leviton was immediately taken to U.S. Public Health Hospital by Sea View ambulance.

Although police said that ward attendants had been searching for Leviton during the night, other sources at Willowbrook said that contrary to regulations, the Willowbrook Review Panel was never notified of the missing patient.

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