

A Man's Dreams Are Trapped in the Body of a Child

By CATE DOTY

Anthony Knox is a grown man confined to a body stuck in childhood.

He has the wants and dreams of an adult: a job, money, a girlfriend. But his abilities are impaired by the renal failure and mental retardation he was born with, and his days instead are devoted to dialysis and a desire to get well.

Mr. Knox, a quietly playful man, was born with kidneys that did not work, a condition that has stunted his growth and impaired his mental

development. Now 24, he stands about four feet tall and functions on a third-grade level. Dialysis and a fear of infections are the constants in his life. He understands his condition and knows he has to find another kidney, for what would be his third transplant after previous efforts failed.

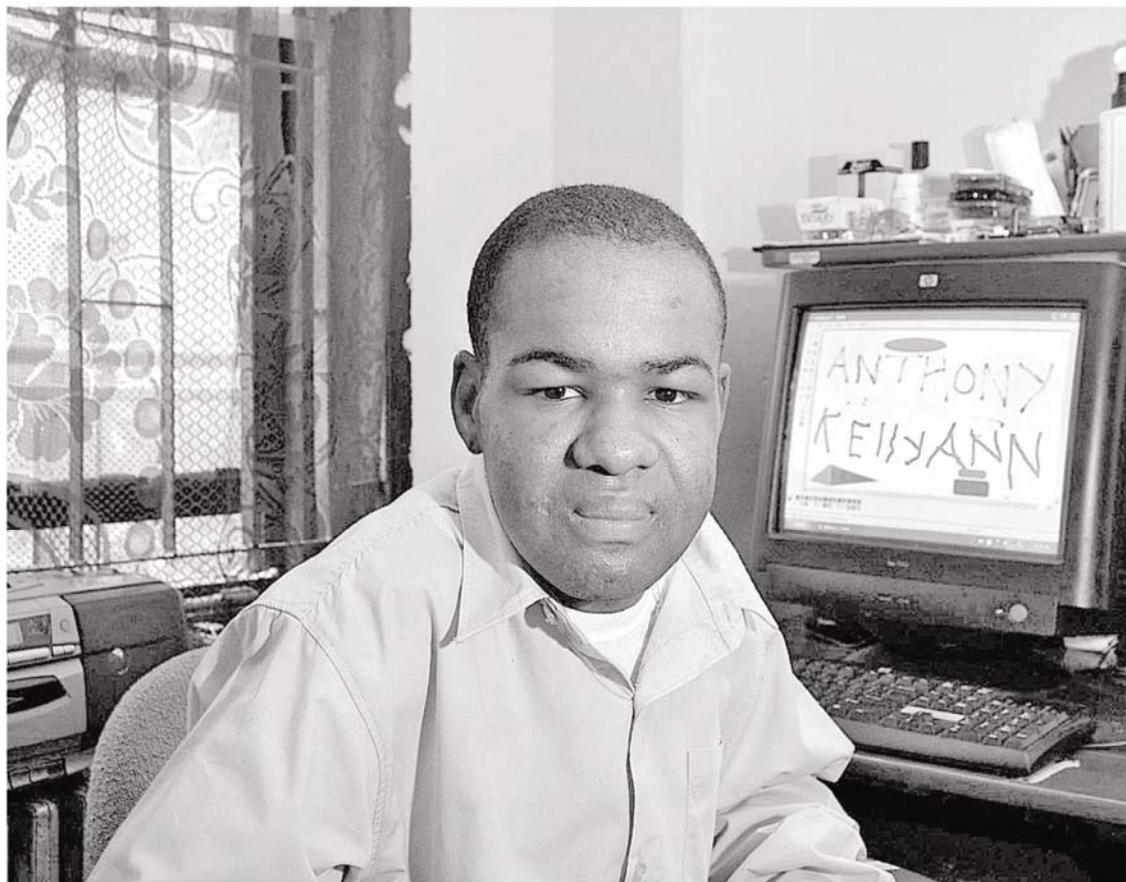
What he does not know, and what his doctors cannot tell him, is what will happen if he cannot find one. He just shrugs his shoulders at the thought.

Mr. Knox lives in a small, dimly lighted room in the back of his grandmother's apartment in Brooklyn. His grandmother, Carrie Knox, 65, has taken care of him since he was 2, when his mother gave up caring for him because she could not handle his sickness, Mrs. Knox said. She has watched her grandson float in and out of the hospital and dialysis since that time. She, more than Mr. Knox, understands his disease and the dreams it has thwarted.

"There are good days and there are bad days," she said, watching him play with his toy cars on the coffee table in their cramped living room. "What can I do? I'm not a doctor. I'm not a nurse."

She takes care of her family with her late husband's Social Security check of \$512 a month and Mr. Knox's public assistance check of \$512. The checks pay the \$300 rent on their four-bedroom apartment and cover their utilities and food. Medicaid pays Mr. Knox's extensive medical bills.

But at a point in her life when her time should be entirely her own, Mrs. Knox rarely gets a day or even a minute to herself. Three grandchildren live with her, including one she



Jonathan Fickies for The New York Times

Anthony Knox, 24, uses a computer bought with money from The New York Times Neediest Cases Fund.

A kidney disorder stunts growth and mental development.

has adopted, and much of her time is devoted to Mr. Knox's constant need for care.

He does not make life easy for her, running away into the neighborhood when no one is looking and sneaking the apple juice that he is not supposed to drink because of his kidneys. But these acts of rebellion reflect the frustration that roils behind his brown eyes.

"I'm just thirsty," Mr. Knox said, casting his eyes to the floor after his grandmother scolded him. "I can't drink nothing."

Hoping for his third transplant, Mr. Knox is not frightened by his frequent bouts with surgery. The nee-

dles at the dialysis center, the tubes in his arms and the confines of his apartment are what make him nervous. He hates being homebound and talks of living on his own one day, an idea that his grandmother shakes her head at.

Mr. Knox is now too sick and weak to make the trip to his day rehabilitation program at the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, where he found a group of friends and someone he calls his girlfriend. He also learned to write and to use a computer there.

But the agency is still working on his behalf, with help from The New York Times Neediest Cases Fund.

When Mr. Knox became confined to his home, Ronn Edwards, the director of the day program at the Brooklyn Bureau reached out to the Neediest Cases Fund, which supports the bureau and six other charities in New York, to provide him with a virtual link to the world outside his

Previously recorded	\$3,074,008.81
Recorded Thursday	97,764.55
Total	\$3,171,773.36
Last year to date	\$3,792,913.38

apartment.

A computer and monitor now provide a bit of much-needed light and a diversion from illness in Mr. Knox's dark room in Brooklyn. The computer cost \$750, provided by the Neediest Cases, and has a painting program that Mr. Knox uses to create pictures for visitors. He now needs an Internet connection, which his caseworker is trying to obtain.

For now, Mr. Knox paints and waits for his kidney, and for a time when he can rejoin his friends at the day rehabilitation program. It is a waiting game that the man inside the child knows how to play.