

Police continue probe for missing woman

The police investigation into Ethel L. Atwell's disappearance from the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook on Oct. 24 continued yesterday, with no new developments reported.

According to Sgt. Patrick McCarthy of the Crimes Against Property Squad, who is supervising the investigation, police will now concentrate on interviewing Mrs. Atwell's friends and associates. An intensive search of the center and its surrounding area revealed nothing, he added.

Police ask anyone who might have information concerning Mrs. Atwell and her disappearance to contact detectives at a special hot-line number, 987-7935. All information will be kept confidential, police say.

Mrs. Atwell, 46, of Newark, was last seen when she left her home as usual at 5:30 a.m. She apparently arrived at work at 6:30 a.m. when employees reported hearing screams in the parking lot behind Building 47 where she worked.

An employee investigated and found only Mrs. Atwell's car and some of her belongings scattered nearby. She has not been seen since.

In a similar incident, Shin-ae (Emma) Lee, 44, a registered nurse at the center, was reported missing in late September. Her body was discovered Aug. 6 buried in a shallow grave in a wooded area near the center.

Detective Anthony Verrilli of the Property Squad is assigned to the case, along with Detective James Donahue of the Crimes Against Persons

Squad.

Although Mrs. Atwell is still officially listed as a missing person, the investigation is being conducted jointly by the Island's Crimes Against Persons Squad, which is usually called in on murder and robbery cases, and the

Crimes Against Property Squad, which handles Island missing persons cases, car thefts, burglaries and incidents of arson. Police said the joint investigation was under way "due to the circumstances" of Mrs. Atwell's disappearance.