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O'Brien, who is supervising the search, said last night the boy's physical and emotional condition has become of increasing concern.

"The boy is unable to take care of himself, would not be able to ask for food or water and has rarely been unsupervised," O'Brien said. "All of these factors contribute to the intensity of our search."

Yesterday several callers reported seeing Steven and authorities began searching the Clove Lake, Silver Lake and Willowbrook areas.

Three search teams were dispatched to Willowbrook after police received a tip that the youngster had been spotted in the area. A supervisor at the Staten Island Developmental Center released several employees from work to assist the teams.

According to Sgt. Eddie Diaz, yesterday's search was "quite extensive" and involved the harbor patrol, seven uniformed officers, five detectives, four auxiliary police officers 20 civilians, REACT — a CB radio group — a housing officer on foot patrol, a radio unit from the same department, and volunteers from the Arthur Kill Correctional facility.

In addition, emergency Service personnel, a helicopter unit and Police Department supervisors also joined the search.

"Personnel-wise, we will continue at this level indefinitely, and are hoping that more volunteers come forward to supplement our forces," said Capt. William Abruzzese, commander of the investigation.

On Monday afternoon, the police were still confident that Steven was in the area of Markham Houses, but yesterday O'Brien expressed the first hint of doubt.

"On the first day I was convinced he was still in this area



Steven Vance

based on calls we had received. But, today (last night) it's up for grabs. What I don't understand is why he hasn't been spotted if he is still in the area," O'Brien said.

Capt. Abruzzese said he believes someone may have found Steven and is caring for him.

"It's hard to imagine that after all the publicity, anyone knowing his whereabouts is unaware of the desperate search underway. We are appealing to anyone that has had any kind of contact with the boy to call us immediately," he said.

Although dragging the waterfront along Richmond Terr. from Port Richmond to the Snug Harbor Cultural Center is still being considered, Capt. Abruzzese said it is uncertain when such an operation might begin.

Every patrol car on Staten Island has a picture of the missing 10-year-old, O'Brien said, and his description is being broadcast every half-an-hour.

"Today we plan to do more of what we did yesterday and the day before that," he said. "There are no hard leads but hopefully someone will spot the youngster and contact us."

At the time of his disappearance, Steven was wearing a red ski sweater, blue jeans, tan work shoes and a black zip-up corduroy jacket.

He is described as being "solidly built," 4 feet, 9 inches tall, weighing 115 pounds, with short curly hair and dark black skin. Steven has a darkened area near his left eye about the size of a nickel, and a scar on his left upper arm the result of falling on a piece of glass.

Police have set up temporary headquarters in the YMCA at Markham Houses and anyone having information may call a special number 24 hours a day: 727-1208.