

Search for girl, 12, on Staten Island

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Police with bloodhounds and helicopters yesterday searched for a 12-year-old Staten Island girl with

Down's syndrome who last was seen walking hand in hand with an apparently homeless man.

Jennifer Schweiger was last seen on Watchogue Road near Bradley Ave. in the Westerleigh section, clutching

the hand of a middle-aged man and looking trustful, according to motorist Muriel Nicosia. The time was 2-20 p.m. Thursday, about a half-hour after she vanished from her home on Wardwell Ave.

The location is about six blocks from her home, farther than she had ever walked alone before, said her father, Kenneth, 40, an assistant manager in the accounting department of New York Telephone Co.



DAUGHTER MISSING: Worried parents Karen and Kenneth Schweiger on Staten Island.

BOB PARSON



Jennifer Schweiger

bors had reported seeing a man of such description scrounging in garbage cans.

Search parties yesterday were canvassing the area for signs of Jennifer, who wears her light brown hair in two pigtails. She is 5-foot-3, 65 pounds, has mongoloid features and hazel eyes. She was wearing a pink T-shirt with a Sesame St. logo on front and white shorts with varicolored vertical stripes. She carried a yellow pocketbook with \$8 to \$10 in it, according to her mother.

Police set up a temporary command post at the firehouse on Jewett Ave. They ask anyone with information to call (718) 447-4168.

Went out to play

Jennifer's mother, Karen, 39, said that the child, friendly and extroverted, went out of the house about 2 p.m. Thursday to play.

"She never wandered very far, just up and down the block," Jennifer's mother said. A half-hour later, the mother and son Kenneth Jr., 17, went looking for Jennifer. Authorities launched a search Thursday night.

"I only hope that the person that has her is taking care of her . . . and giving her lots of fruit juice," said her father. "She likes fruit juice."

The stranger with whom Jennifer was seen was described as seedy, in his late 50s or early 60s, about 5-foot-8, 165 pounds, wearing a blue shirt and medium gray pants. He was balding and was missing some front teeth. Neigh-