

Hunt for missing girl into 4th day

By WILLIAM KLEINKNECHT
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Police canvassed Westerleigh homes yesterday as the search continued for a 12-year-old Down's syndrome girl who disappeared from her neighborhood on Thursday — perhaps in the company of a middle-aged mentally retarded man she met on the street.

More than a dozen officers went door-to-door seeking information on Jennifer Schweiger, who is afflicted with Down's syndrome and a congenital heart condition that should have kept her from

walking very far.

The child, described as 4 feet 3 inches tall and 65 pounds with brown hair and hazel eyes, was last seen Thursday evening as she walked on Jewett Avenue, a block from her Wardwell Avenue home.

She wore a pink Sesame Street T-shirt and pastel-colored shorts and was carrying a yellow pocketbook.

Sgt. Jay Friedman said officers were focusing door-to-door interviews on the neighborhood surrounding Wardwell Avenue but would broaden their radius if the search continued.

Police directed the search using a map posted in a temporary command post police had set up Friday in a firehouse at the corner of Jewett Avenue and Markham Place.

No clues to the child's disappearance had turned up as of last night. Police would not confirm reports that detectives had assembled a lineup of people matching the description of a middle-aged man spotted walking with the child late Thursday, when she was last seen.

Both police and residents described

the man as 5-foot-11 and slightly built with a bald spot on the back of his head, was apparently mentally retarded and frequently had searched for returnable bottles in the neighborhood.

The dense community of neat single-family homes that surrounds Wardwell Avenue was busy with police officers and cruising automobiles as the search continued yesterday.

A crowd of friends and neighbors kept vigil outside the Schweiger home as

(See JENNIFER, Page A 3)



Jennifer Schweiger

Page 1 of 2