

Cops call out for help in finding Jennifer

By GLENN CHAPMAN
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

As volunteers searched Staten Island's shoreline, detectives reviewing each step in the search for Jennifer Schweiger called out to anyone who can help them retrace the girl's movements the day she disappeared.

"It's hard to believe that nobody saw her that day," said Lt. Louis Fiori. "If someone who saw her has called us, they should call again. If they haven't spoken with us, they should definitely call."

Anyone with information concerning the missing 12-year-old Westerleigh girl can contact investigators at a 24-hour hotline number, 447-4168. Detectives Virginia Scarabino, Ralph Aquino and Robert Jenson of the Crimes Against Property Squad are handling the case and can be reached during the day at 390-8154.

"We are investigating a lot of things," Fiori said, "certainly more than has ever been done with this type of case before."

Jennifer was apparently making her way to a store near her Wardwell Avenue home when she vanished July 9 at about 2 p.m. A number of witnesses said they saw the girl walking with a mildly retarded man described as about 60 years old, 5 feet 11 inches tall

with a slim build and a bald spot on the back of his head.

Authorities earlier this week said the man, believed to be a transient who had been living in a makeshift campsite on the grounds of SIDC, may be linked to Jennifer's disappearance, as well as those of three other Staten Island children.

He was "somehow placed in the area" prior to the disappearance of 7-year-old Holly Ann Hughes of Port Richmond in July 1981 and 10-year-old Tiahease Jackson of Mariners Harbor two years later, according to officials. Police declined to discuss the third case, which occurred about 15 years ago.

Jennifer, her hair in pigtails, was carrying a bright yellow pocketbook and wearing a pink "Sesame Street" shirt and shorts with multicolored stripes the day she vanished.

A bloodhound brought in the next day followed the girl's trail to Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook, then apparently lost it because of heat and humidity.

"We feel that the girl was on the SIDC property, that is why the search there was so intense," Fiori said.

Investigators yesterday were

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Linda Fawcett, Mary Anne Christoffersen and Patricia Kirk, left to right, conduct a thorough search of a thickly wooded area.

still trying to determine exactly how Jennifer traveled from her home to SIDC, a distance of about a mile. Jennifer, who has congenital heart disease and Down's syn-

drome, would not have been able to travel far quickly because of the heat, her father Kenneth, said early in the search.

Anyone who was in the Victory

Boulevard/Willowbrook Road area the afternoon Jennifer vanished that may have seen the girl is asked to contact investigators.

Police yesterday said they were

still awaiting the results of a blood sample taken from one of the buildings on the SIDC grounds during the search.

According to police, there were no patrol cars out searching for the girl yesterday, but investigative units using "sophisticated, selective methods" were in the field. Authorities refused to give further details.

Volunteers continued to search areas on the North Shore, focusing attention on the Kill Van Kull shoreline from Port Richmond Avenue to Western Avenue in Mariners Harbor. Acting on tips from psychics, volunteers had taken to the Richmond Terrace area earlier in the week.

Yesterday's search also involved lots and cemeteries on the North Shore, authorities said.

Volunteers said they took posters calling for help in the hunt for Jennifer to New Jersey police, police in Hudson, Union and Essex counties have been alerted.

Jennifer's family and friends are continuing to offer a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the girl's return.

Police reiterated that no evidence has yet been found to indicate that a crime has been committed and said the girl is being considered a missing child.

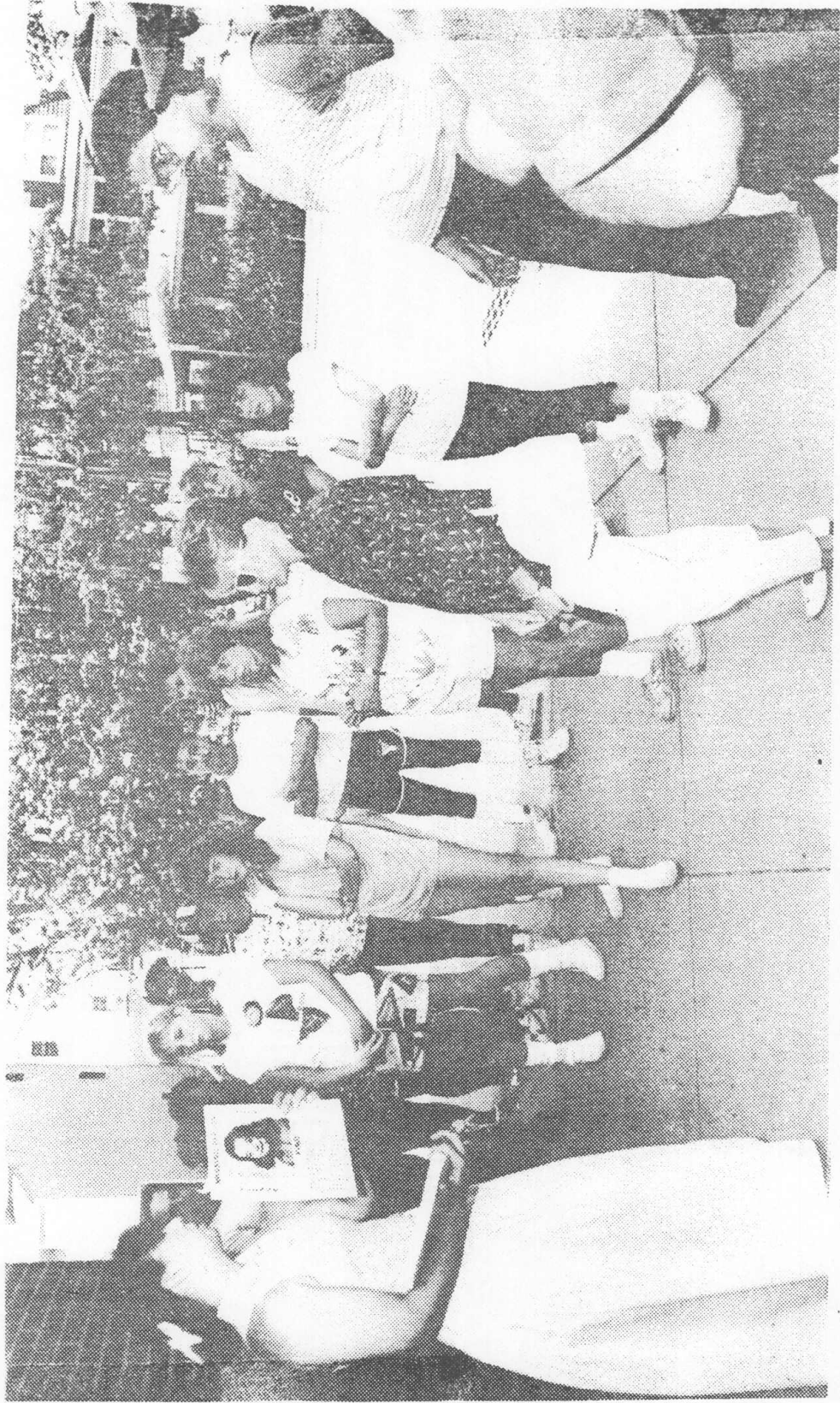
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ADVANCE PHOTOS/FRANK J. JOHNS

Janet Crabbe, a volunteer searcher, holds a piece children's clothing she found on the grounds of a cemetery behind the Burger King off Forest Avenue. It is not the same as Jennifer had been wearing.

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Donna Cutugno, left, a member of a group called Friends of Jennifer, gives out pictures of the missing Jennifer Schweiger and instructions to volunteers.

Donna Cutugno # 1998