

The Search: Volunteers re-cover a lot of ground

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Off-duty firefighters and police officers joined other volunteers and a team of detectives to help canvass Westerleigh and Willowbrook yesterday in an effort to turn up new leads in the search for Jennifer Schweiger.

Investigators had hoped that by scouring the area on the same day of the week that the girl vanished and at about the same time, they would be able to find additional witnesses. The girl has been missing for more than two weeks.

Jennifer disappeared from the street near her Wardwell Avenue home in Westerleigh July 9 at about 2 p.m. Witnesses reported seeing the girl walking with a white man, about 60 years old, 5 feet 11 inches tall with a slim build and a bald spot on the back of his head.

Authorities later revealed that a man matching that description has been viewed as possibly being connected with the disappearances of three other Staten Island children.

A group of about 15 people, headed by Detectives Robert Jensen and Ralph Aquino, combed the area between Jennifer's home and the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC) from 1 to 3 p.m., but failed to turn up any new clues, according to police.

"I still feel there is something out there that could help us that we haven't learned yet," said Lt. Louis Fiori. "We are running down all the possibilities."

About 35 volunteers working as part of a group called The Friends of Jennifer searched yards and storage areas of stores along Port Richmond Avenue and in the surrounding area, according to Donna Cutugno, a member of the group. Members of the group asked individual shopkeepers for permission to look about their premises.

Police said a caller to the 24-



Police Officer Lisa DeLuca and volunteer Francesca Brizza check lists of names of people who have been interviewed.

hour hotline, 447-4168, reported seeing Jennifer "amid cartons" in the Port Richmond area and that the information was passed on to the searchers.

Volunteers also hunted through abandoned lots in Port Richmond and walked the length of the railroad tracks running along the Kill Van Kull shoreline from Port Richmond to Mariners Harbor.

Members of the group, using flashlights provided by Con Edison, searched through Baron Hirsch Cemetery in Graniteville last night.

No trace of the girl has been found, but volunteers will continue to meet at the Jewett Avenue firehouse daily at noon and 7

p.m., according to Ms. Cutugno.

"Police are looking into every lead," she said. "Anyone who knows anything about this should call them."

Police continued to advise officers on patrol to be on the lookout for Jennifer, and pictures of the girl have been placed in each patrol car, officials said.

Today investigators expected to receive the results of tests being conducted on a small amount of blood found in a building on the SIDC grounds last week. A police bloodhound had followed the missing girl's scent to the center.

Anyone with information concerning the girl's disappearance is asked to call the police hotline.