

Cops deny TV report on missing Jennifer

By GLENN CHAPMAN
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The detective in charge of the search for missing Jennifer Schweiger said yesterday that a televised report stating that major new evidence had been uncovered in the search and that an arrest was imminent in connection with the girl's disappearance, was false.

"As far as I know, that is not the case," said Lt. Louis Fiori, who is commanding the team of detectives investigating the disappearance of the 12-year-old Westerleigh girl. "If they had evidence of a crime, they would call us to the scene to check it. I don't have knowledge of that going on here."

Another police source, however, said police do expect to make an arrest in the case but gave no indication when that might be.

According to Fiori, detectives last night were continuing to sift through information gathered so far in the hunt and were reviewing statements made by witnesses who saw the girl the day she vanished from a street near her Wardwell Avenue home.

Jennifer, who has Down's syndrome and congenital heart disease, has been the subject of an intense search since she disappeared July 9. Police said she was last seen walking with a transient described as about 5 feet, 11 inches tall, weighing 150 pounds, and having a bald spot on the back of his head.

Authorities said early in the search that the same transient may have been linked to three other Island children who disappeared over the past 15 years.

Meanwhile, volunteers in the Friends of Jennifer group plan to

conduct a "Search for Jennifer Saturday" tomorrow. Searchers hope to gather hundreds of people from New York and New Jersey at Holy Family R.C. Church on Watchogue Road in Westerleigh at noon and then launch a massive search of Staten Island communi-

ties, according to Donna Cutugno of the volunteer group.

Local, city and state politicians have been invited to take part in the event, which will be opened with a balloon launch. Each balloon will have the missing girl's poster tied to it, Mrs. Cutugno said.

Volunteer searchers yesterday scoured areas off the Staten Island Expressway service road and a park on North Avenue in Westerleigh. Police teams continued yesterday searching the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center and surrounding areas, authorities said.