

down the narrow path that led to the grave site.

Officers dug around the small body, leaving it encased in dirt so as not to damage it or destroy any evidence. The still figure was carefully lifted out of the three-foot deep grave and wrapped in a bodybag.

Officers, carrying the bodybag on a stretcher, loaded it into the waiting ambulance at 2:30 a.m.

More than a dozen plastic bags filled with dirt taken from the grave were also placed into the ambulance. EMS specialists Nick Catello and Andres Rodriguez manned the ambulance and received a police escort to the medical examiner's morgue in Manhattan.

Police at the scene said that because of the decomposition and the dirt, it was not possible to identify any of the child's features or even the sex.

The identity of the body and possibly the cause of death were expected to be available from the medical examiner's office late today, police said.

However, volunteers who found the grave said the hands and feet were undersized like those of a Down's syndrome child, and those interviewed by the Advance said they felt in their hearts that it was Jennifer.

Jennifer had Down's syndrome and was last seen walking on the SIDC grounds with Andre Rand, a 43-year-old drifter who has been arrested in connection with her disappearance.

The day after she vanished, a trained blood hound followed the girl's scent to an abandoned swimming pool on the SIDC grounds before losing her trail.

The pool sits only a few hundred yards from a makeshift campsite Rand had been using in a wooded area. Rand's campsite lies between the pool and the gravesite.

Rand was arrested Aug. 4 and charged with kidnapping Jennifer. He is undergoing psychiatric testing at Kings County Hospital. He is due to return to court Sept. 4.

Rand has a history of crimes against children which includes rape and kidnapping.

The commando-like raid that led to the body's discovery was prompted by off duty firefighter George Kramer, 58, of Great Kills. Kramer and his wife, Nancy, were taking part in a massive search of SIDC Saturday when something about a 15-foot wide span of earth that opened off a path through dense woods behind Building 27 struck him as

strange. The ground was smooth and slightly elevated, and reportedly Kramer was troubled by "balls of clay" strewn about the area.

Volunteers were ordered off the grounds by SIDC security before Kramer had a chance to bring in fellow volunteers to help dig up the spot, according to Mrs. Cutugno, co-ordinator of the Friends of Jennifer, a group that has searched daily for the missing girl.

Thoughts of the spot bothered Kramer for five days, and yesterday afternoon he sneaked onto the grounds alone and began poking around in the area. He dug a bit with a stick, and hit what he thought was a white plastic bag, volunteers said.

Kramer met the volunteer group when it gathered at Holy Family R.C. Church at 7 p.m., and pulled aside another veteran searcher, off-duty ESU Sgt. Ron Jacobs. Kramer told Jacobs, Mrs. Cutugno and other volunteers of his suspicions, and a "strike force" was assembled.

Mrs. Cutugno said the strike force consisted of the Kramers; AnneMarie Welch of Graniteville; Scott Peters of Tottenville; Richard Burdge of Westerleigh; Jacobs and his wife, Maureen; Joan Aust of Silver Lake; Peter Skorney and Christopher Pearson of Westerleigh; Mrs. Cutugno and her husband, Charles, and Robert Devine.

Jacobs made a telephone call to the 122nd Precinct stationhouse in New Dorp, and was soon met at the church by ESU Officers Raymond Smith and Brian McConville. Smith and McConville were about to go to dinner when they got the call for help.

Because security at SIDC reportedly did not want the volunteers roaming the grounds, the team slipped in through a rear entrance. Darkness was beginning to fall as Jacobs and the officers dug at the grave with their hands. Other volunteers held flashlights to help the officers see.

"It was a spot like 20 other spots, nothing special about it," Jacobs said while standing near the entrance to the path. "I'm surprised. The dogs have been over it, I've been over that spot numerous times."

According to Cutugno and other volunteers, once the surface of the ground was penetrated, the soil became loose. Tree roots ran through the dirt, and searchers said it seemed that the roots had been peeled back, then pushed back over the body to discourage

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