

# Volunteers vow to press search for others

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They could not be stopped. And now they have vowed to continue. Even though Donna Cutugno, 32, coordinator of the Friends of Jennifer group, described the mood among the searchers as one of "physical and mental exhaustion," she had enough energy left yesterday afternoon to praise those "who came day after day, night after night..."

The volunteers will not disband the Friends of Jennifer until they learn of the whereabouts of 7-year-old Holly Ann Hughes and 10-year-old Tiahease Jackson. Holly Ann disappeared in July 1981 and Tiahease vanished in August 1983.

"If the police need a hand in this, we most certainly will continue. We'll be available," Mrs. Cutugno said.

The group met hours before a pathologist's findings confirmed that the naked body found in a shallow grave Wednesday night was Jennifer Schweiger's.

"I'm relieved that it's over, that we finally found her, that we can give her a decent burial and put her family's mind to rest," a tearful Mrs. Cutugno told reporters and a group of about 25 volunteers who gathered in Holy Family R.C. Church to pray, console one another and reflect on the search that has created a bond between them.

Peter Skorney said, for exam-



ADVANCE PHOTOS/STEVE ZAFFRANO  
Donna Cutugno talks to reporters.



Police Chief Robert Johnston answers a question during a press conference.

ple. "We really didn't know each other. Basically it was first names. In each of the volunteers, each one has his own story to tell. It was an extraordinary volunteer effort."

Betty Fawcett, of Dongan Hills, said the discovery of the child's body left her "very empty," while her 25-year-old daughter, Linda, said when you "see something so close like this, it hits close to home."

The Rev. Henry Gentile of Holy Family Church said he was proud of the group's persistence.

"I've never seen a community

for the Jackson family. You have to know."

"Think of it. If it was your child, you wouldn't want people to give up," Mrs. Cutugno said.

Ever since the picture of suspected kidnaper Andre Rand hit the newspapers, Mrs. Cutugno said she wrestled with the notion of whether Jennifer was still living.

"One day you'd feel she's alive, and the next day... it was a day-to-day thing. We still don't know how long she was (buried) there."

"It started out as just riding through Willowbrook and then became an obsession," said Linda Farina.

"I have no feelings right now. I got up this morning and I didn't know what to do with myself. I usually do my work and come out here at 12," Mrs. Farina said.

"I'm shook up about the whole thing. I was hoping she would be alive," said Richard Burdge. "But I think if they need my help for someone else — I'll be there. It's from the heart. This was too many times (that a child has disappeared). I feel a lot safer now," he said.

Meanwhile, on Wardwell Avenue, a few close friends stayed up all Wednesday night with the Schweigers, according to a neighbor.

"Everyone was catnapping, except Karen (Schweiger). She was talking all night," the friend said. Though the Schweigers had ap-

peared calm publicly, "they've been breaking down," the friend said.

Yesterday morning, neighbors took turns standing by outside the family home, which was guarded by a police officer.

The neighbor said if there was anything positive about the incident, "the kids seem to be learning to say 'no' to strangers. Now they say, 'Is that man bad. Is that man bad?' I just hope it sticks."

Father Henry said he had a

three-hour conversation Wednesday afternoon with the Rev. Charles G. Muskett, who had rented one of the rooms in his West Brighton home to suspected kidnapper Andre Rand.

"I had spoken to Muskett and he said: 'Rand says you're looking in the wrong places. No, we were looking in the right place.' Father Henry said yesterday.

"In the end he (the killer) was a very smart man, but collectively, we were smarter," said Mrs. Cutugno.