

# Kaipara crowd gets right behind Rory fund-razor

by Annette Lamblay

It was a time of song, laughter and tears — a community rallying together to help support 7-year-old Rory Gardiner in his fight against cancer.

The brave Dargaville lad has endured five operations to remove two brain tumours and is now nearing the end of 31 sessions of radiotherapy treatment.

To help raise funds for the family, a Kina Cut event was held last weekend with 16 people stepping up to have their heads shaved in Dargaville's main street.

While the children's ukulele band strummed and sang, Kaipara Mayor Neil Tiller, Dargaville Primary School principal Alan Russek and owner of Dargaville Hunting and Fishing Jason Campbell stepped up to the "chopping block".

They were followed by six burly blokes from Carter's and then Rory's good friend Zach Willy, 8, and Rory's brother, Sam, 9.

Rory's dad, Sean, and family friend Trudi Johnston were next to take the plunge. Trudi's son, Kody, is Rory's best mate and it had been Trudi that had organised the event.

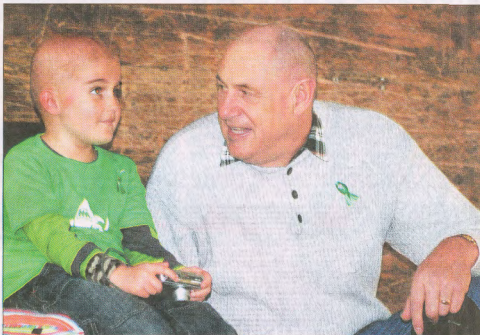
But an emotional Trudi couldn't help shedding a few tears as her hair fell to the floor and, in a touching moment, it was Rory who stepped forward to shave his dad's head. He has since said he wants his dad's hair to grow back " pronto".

Unexpectedly, three members of the crowd spontaneously called for cash donations to also have their locks lopped.

Truancy officer Lucy Heller raised \$500, Mark Willy, owner of Blah Blah Cafe (and Zach's dad) \$300, and intermediate pupil Tahlia Rogers-Brown \$70.

A cake stall, the sale of green Rory ribbons, sausages and bread, and the auction of fax kete added to the coffers with \$3739.90 raised on the day, and more pledges to come.

"When we moved from Whangarei to Dargaville three years ago many people couldn't understand our decision," said



**LOOKALIKES:** "What do you think about that Rory?" asks Kaipara Mayor Neil Tiller.

Rory's mother, Leigh Honnor.

"It is an old-fashioned Kiwi town and we love it... the kind of environment Sean and I want to bring our boys up in. Since Rory's illness, the people of the Kaipara have shown us a strong sense of community, compassion, generosity, and selflessness. It has made it easier for us all to face each day. We know we are not alone," she said.

Ms Honnor said they were blown away by the number of people who were there, and how they were prepared to donate to help Rory's fight.

Rory was happy on the stage with his mates Korie, Kody and Zach along with a bald mayor keeping him company.



**BUDDIES:** Sean Gardiner and Trudi Johnston with sons Rory and Kody, who are best friends.



**STRINGALONG:** Brody Manson and Danielle Steed entertain the street crowd.

**CAPED CRUSADERS:** School friend Zach Willy and brother Sam Gardiner show their support for Rory.