

Rory squares up to gruelling treatment

Local boy Rory Gardiner has entered the final phase of treatment in his battle against brain cancer.

The brave seven-year-old Dargaville Primary School student was diagnosed earlier this year.

Rory has had surgery to remove two tumours, followed by weeks of gruelling chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Family friends, school officials and community leaders have taken up the fundraising challenge to help Rory and his family, after mum Leigh Honnor had to stop work to care for him.

Supporters including Rory's dad Sean had their heads shaved for the cause.

Ms Honnor says Rory returns to Starship Children's Hospital today for more chemotherapy.

"He will have four cycles of four weeks each and will likely remain in Auckland, at either Starship or Ronald McDonald House, for that time," she says.

Rory will have a semi-permanent IV line inserted into his chest to deliver the chemotherapy drugs.

"The drugs will weaken Rory's immune system making him highly susceptible to potentially life-threatening infections."

Mrs Honnor says Rory will receive a transfusion of his own stem cells, harvested earlier this year, to help his system recover.

She says Rory has loved having five weeks off at home after five operations and 31 radiotherapy sessions.

He has enjoyed spending two weeks at school, catching up with friends Korie and Kody, having adventures in Taranaki while visiting nana and poppa Honnor, staying with grannie and granddad Gardiner, catching up with extended whanau, and spending time at Kai Iwi Lakes.

Rory's family thanks the fol-

lowing Dargaville families for their ongoing care and support: Johnstons, Morrisons, Newmans, Willys and Fremlins.

"We are very grateful," Mrs Honnor says.

Follow the final leg of Rory's journey at www.rorygardiner.co.nz.



Little battler: Rory Gardiner with juvenile kiwi Mokau just before the bird's release on Mt Taranaki recently.