

NEWS RELEASE

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MIT STUDENTS RAZOR TO RAISE AWARENESS

For the second year in a row the students at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) will shave their hair in support of the Leukaemia & Blood Foundation's (LBF) Shave campaign.

On 19-20 May the MIT campus is hosting a two-day Shave for a Cure event featuring guests DJ Peter De Palagi of Flava Radio and special guest speaker Rachel Sharma.

The event is organised by MIT students Crystal Sami and Lovejit Kaur who recruited lecturers and classmates to lose their locks for the charity.

"We are thankful to those who volunteered to shave," said Crystal. "For women especially, long hair is treasured. For some, lengthy locks are tied to culture and oftentimes religion, especially in the Indian community."

Crystal and Lovejit invited special guest speaker twenty-one year old Rachel Sharma to share her story with those who might hesitate for beauty's sake. At the age of eleven Rachel was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia.

Each year, over 2,200 patients are diagnosed with leukaemia, lymphoma or related blood condition. "Often a bone marrow transplant is the only possible treatment for many. Patients with ancestors from the Indian subcontinent are at a disadvantage as India is only just taking its first steps in 2009 to start a bone marrow registry," explained Raewyn Fisher, of the New Zealand Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

As a survivor, Rachel is now urging people of Indian descent, and other ethnic minorities, to join the New Zealand Bone Marrow Donor Registry to help other patients with ancestors from the Indian subcontinent.

The Leukaemia & Blood Foundation communications and marketing manager, Leola Abraham says, "shaving is a simple but bold way of supporting those living with leukaemia, lymphoma and related blood conditions, many of whom lose their hair as a result of treatment.

"When you shave you have a choice. Shave 09 is a great way of showing support to those who often don't have a choice," Leola stated.

The Leukaemia & Blood Foundation is aiming to get 10,000 people – the number of New Zealanders who are living with a blood cancer – to shave their hair to help raise money for its work.

This national campaign runs annually and raises funds for the Leukaemia & Blood Foundation's core services: Patient support (which costs more than \$1000 a day to provide), awareness, advocacy and research.

Every day six children and adults in New Zealand are diagnosed with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma or a related blood condition. "We are thankful that MIT students continue to get involved with Shave. Each year they do something different and special. We are grateful for their ongoing support."

To take part in Shave 09, register at www.shaveforcure.co.nz.

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About Shave for a Cure

The Leukaemia & Blood Foundation is raising funds for the 10,000 New Zealanders currently living with leukaemia or other blood conditions.

All funds raised by will go towards funding three key components of the Leukaemia & Blood Foundation's work – patient support (which costs more than \$1,000 a day to provide), awareness, advocacy and research.

Visit www.shaveforcure.co.nz to find out more or to register to part of Shave 09.

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