

# Help send Brittany to Rainbow's End

■ This week, *North Canterbury News* and the Child Cancer Foundation join together to ask the public for support in helping 11-year-old Swannanoa girl Brittany Kremers. Brittany has endured months of chemotherapy and surgery to treat her cancer. Now her parents want to put a smile back on her face by taking her to Rainbow's End in Auckland, but cannot afford the trip. The Child Cancer Foundation is able to provide some assistance, but is hoping the public may also be able to help. For details on how to contribute, see page 2.

By Kim Newth

**S** EVEN months ago, it looked as if Brittany Kremers had beaten her battle with cancer.

It started as a lump on her face in June 2006. That lump turned out to be a rare and aggressive form of cancer, rhabdomyosarcoma.

She finished chemotherapy last October and all seemed well. Brittany's parents, Dawn and Marcel, thought the worst was over. At the start of the year, Brittany went back to school and even began swimming lessons.

"But when we had a follow-up MRI in early March, it showed that the monster was back in full glory. You can only imagine how devastated we all were," said Mrs Kremers.

In April, Lower Hutt plastic and craniofacial surgeon Charles Davis operated on Brittany to remove the tumour, in a gruelling 13-hour procedure.

"Brittany spent a week in ICU and went back to surgery four times," said Mrs Kremers.

"We spent a total of three weeks in Lower Hutt. They have done some pretty major surgery: she has lost part of her jaw and they removed both stomach muscles to replace the tissue they had to remove from her face and cheek."

The effects of surgery are ongoing. Brittany has speech difficulties and she has a feeding tube in her stomach. Plus, she is back on chemotherapy to try to kill off any remaining cancer cells.

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**Brave Brittany:** Wearing her beads of courage (one for every cancer procedure) is Swannanoa's Brittany Kremers, 11, with her mother, Dawn.

PHOTO: KIM NEWTH

# Battling Brittany deserves treat

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"She has been given a less than 10% chance of a full cure, but we will fight and we will take that 10% chance," said Mrs Kremers.

What her parents now see is a little girl who is tired of battling and could really do with a treat.

A big disappointment this year was missing out on a Korocare trip to Disneyland due to her relapse.

Her parents would love to take her to Rainbow's End, but cannot afford to do so. Trying to work around Brittany's surgery and chemotherapy has stretched the family budget.

The Child Cancer Foundation has been a pillar of support for the



**Brittany with her surgical team:** Plastic and craniofacial surgeon Charles Davis (left) and senior plastic surgery registrar Dr Jonathan Burge.

family and will also help meet some of their costs in Auckland. Family Support Coordinator Cynthia Annear said Brittany was a special girl and her family had been through a great deal.

"I fully support what the family is trying to do for her and

I hope we are able to get some help from the public for them to go to Auckland."

■ If you are able to assist, please contact Cynthia at the Child Cancer Foundation on phone (03) 365 1485.