

Wedding day 'more than joy

Dying mum gets her one big wish

A father was in tears as he walked his terminally ill teenage daughter down the aisle on Saturday.

Tangi Rongo said the wedding had made his 19-year-old daughter's "dreams come true".

Maire Taomia was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October and, as a dying wish, asked her father to give his blessing for the marriage.

The Ashburton woman and Marouna Tunui, 23, were married in a bittersweet ceremony, before 300 friends and family, at St Christopher's Church in Avonhead, Christchurch.

"I am just happy for her," Mr Rongo said.

"It was very, very emotional, and I was crying all the way down [the

aisle].

"I don't know how to describe it; it is more than joy."

When her doctor told Ms Taomia there was nothing more the medical fraternity could do, she told her father: "I want to get married."

The young couple, who have been together for more than two years, have a one-year-old son, Detroit.

The couple have lived in a single-bed room in Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

Mr Rongo said his daughter was energetic and beautiful during the ceremony, but her illness was not forgotten.

"It would be pretty hard for people to forget the reason behind their early wedding. They all knew she

was sick and that was at the back of people's minds," he said.

Mr Rongo said Maire made a speech, saying: "Look at me, I am not sick. Can't you see me? I am still here."

Mr Rongo said a weight had been lifted off his shoulders. "This weight I have been carrying for the last 3½ months lifted. My daughter can go and enjoy life now. She is free and someone is there looking after her," he said.

CanTeen, the Cancer Society of New Zealand and Christchurch's Millennium Hotel covered the costs of a wedding cake and dress, a limousine, a photographer and a hotel room for the honeymoon. Fairfax



Dream come true: Maire Taomia marries Marouna Tunui.

Photo: FAIRFAX



The Southland Times
www.southlandtimes.co.nz

Monday, January 10, 2011

Something blue

It makes a touching contrast. In Auckland a multimillion-dollar, lavishly opulent wedding between the son of a computer-circuit magnate and a beauty queen doctor has proven a celebration of overbrimming opulence.

Nine helicopters, dress-up horses, hundreds of jetted-in guests, fireworks, all to be filmed for a TV series . . . it's liable to strike many New Zealanders as excessive.

But good luck to Vikram Aditya Kumar and Pooja Chitgopeker.

Cultural distinctions aside, this is their way to celebrate love and good fortune – two things which, by the way, should be celebrated.

A much more assailed couple have been married in Christchurch, though this time the joy is hardly circumstantial.

The ceremony is the dying wish of 19-year-old mother Maire Taomia.

She and her partner Marouna Tunui have a 1-year-old son and her decision to endure chemotherapy was made to lengthen, any way she could, her time with her child.

Though doctors have said they can do no more for her, she does not abandon hope.

But the long-planned wedding has been brought forward, even so.

CanTeen, the Cancer Society and the Christchurch Millennium Hotel have donated a wedding cake, dress, limousine, photographer, and hotel room for the honeymoon.

In back of these stories comes news from Buckingham Palace, of plans for the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton in late April.

These, clearly, have been made to draw a fine line between celebrating without unseemly ostentation, while still acknowledging that it's times like these one does want to bring out the family silver.



So it's yes to Westminster Abbey as the venue, but the glass coach used by Diana and Sarah Ferguson won't be trotted out this time.

Every couple striking out together, whatever the circumstances, face enormous challenges.

It would be easier to celebrate the news that New Zealand's divorce rate has fallen to a 30-year low, if this were not tied quite so closely to the figures showing the marriage rate has been falling away in rather the same manner, and breakups of those who are in de facto relationships are not so tidily collatable for the statistical record.

But in a week that has not lacked for nuptial news, fresh New Zealand research has provided further evidence to support the view that long relationships, whether in marriage or not, are a key to good health.

People in relationships for more than five years are less likely to be depressed, to consider or attempt suicide, or be dependent on alcohol or drugs.

That might seem less than surprising.

Actually, it counters previous studies which suggested more benefits from legal marriages than from cohabiting relationships.

In any case, it turns out that relationships are worth having and are worth working on.



Bride's emotional wedding day a dream come true

Olivia Carville

A Christchurch father was in tears as he walked his terminally ill teenage daughter down the aisle on Saturday.

Tangi Rongo said the wedding had made his 19-year-old daughter's "dreams come true".

Maire Taomia was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October and, as a dying wish, asked her father to give his blessing for the marriage.

The Ashburton woman and Marouna Tunui, 23, were married in a bittersweet ceremony before 300 friends and family at St Christopher's Church in Avonhead.

"I am just happy for her," Rongo said. "It was very, very emotional, and I was crying all the way down [the aisle]. I don't know how to describe it;

it is more than joy."

When the doctor told Taomia there was nothing more they could do, she had told her father: "I want to get married."

The young couple, who have been together for more than two years, have a one-year-old son, Detroit.

The pair have lived in a single-bed room in Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

Rongo said his daughter was energetic and beautiful during the ceremony, but her illness was not forgotten.

"It would be pretty hard for people to forget the reason behind their early wedding. They all knew she was sick and that was at the back of people's minds," he said.

Rongo said Taomia made a

speech, saying: "Look at me, I am not sick. Can't you see me? I am still here."

Rongo told The Press yesterday a weight had been lifted off his shoulders.

"This weight I have been carrying for the last 3½ months lifted. My daughter can go and enjoy life now," he said.

"She is free and someone is there looking after her," he said.

CanTeen, the Cancer Society of New Zealand and Christchurch's Millennium Hotel covered the costs of a wedding cake, a wedding dress, a limousine, a photographer and a hotel room for the couple's honeymoon.



Wedo: Marouna Tunui and his bride, Maire Taomia, during their marriage service on Saturday at St Christopher's Church, Avonhead.

Photo: DON SCOTT



Cancer victim marries love

A Christchurch father was in tears as he walked his terminally ill teenage daughter down the aisle on Saturday.

Tangi Rongo said the wedding had made his 19-year-old daughter's "dreams come true".

Maire Taomia was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October and, as a dying wish, asked her father to give his blessing for the marriage.

The Ashburton woman and Marouna Tunui, 23, were married in a bittersweet ceremony, before 300 friends and family, at St Christopher's Church in Avonhead.

"I am just happy for her," Rongo said.

"It was very, very emotional, and I was crying all the way down [the aisle].

"I don't know how to describe it, it is more than joy."

When the doctor told Taomia there was nothing more they could do, she had told her father: "I want to get married." The young couple, who have been together for more than two years, have a one-year-old son. Detroit.

The pair have lived in a single-bed room in Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

Rongo said his daughter was energetic and beautiful during the ceremony, but her illness was not forgotten.

"It would be pretty hard for people to forget the reason behind their early wedding. They all knew she was sick and that was at the back of people's minds," he said.

Rongo said Taomia made a speech, saying: "Look at me, I am not sick. Can't you see me? I am still here."

Rongo said yesterday a weight had been lifted off his shoulders.

"This weight I have been carrying for the last three and a half months lifted. My daughter can go and enjoy life now. She is free and someone is there looking after her," he said.

CanTeen, the Cancer Society of New Zealand and Christchurch's Millennium Hotel covered the costs of a wedding cake, a wedding dress, a limousine, a photographer and a hotel room for the couple's honeymoon.



Timaru Herald
Monday 10/1/2011
Page: 5
Section: General News
Region: Timaru Canterbury Circulation: 14,329
Type: Provincial
Size: 425.19 sq.cms.
Frequency: MTWTFS-

Brief: NT-CANTEEN
Page 2 of 2



Happy: The wedding of cancer sufferer Maire Taomia (bride) to Marouna Tunui at St Christopher's Avonhead road by the Rev James Masters.
Photo: FAIRFAX



Marie sets her heart on a day to remember

Olivia Carville

A BITTERSWEET wedding will be held in Christchurch today to respect the dying wish of a 19-year-old mother.

Maire Taomia, of Ashburton, was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October 2009 and has been in the oncology ward of Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

"Ever since I found out I was diagnosed with cancer, I didn't want to leave the wedding until later. I was planning on waiting until my late 20s to get married, but the doctors don't think I will make it to that age and told me to do the things I want to do now," she said.

She was trying not to get too excited before the wedding.

"I don't want to worry about the little things because tomorrow is just about us. I am really happy about it, so happy I want to cry. We are in love," she said.

Her partner, Marouna Tunui, 23, has been living in the single-bed hospital room with Taomia.

He had butterflies in his stomach about the wedding, he said yesterday.

"I want to get married in case something happens to her, so I have something that will remind me of her and remind me of the day that I was married to her," he said.

The couple have been together for more than two years and have a one-year-old son, Detroit.

Miss Taomia said Detroit was the sole reason she had agreed to go through with chemotherapy.

"The doctors said the chemo may keep me here longer and I want to be here with him. I want to be here as long as I can for him," she said.

"I always think I'm going to make it. I always think I'm going to get better."

Detroit lives with her mother in Ashburton, but visits her often.

"He likes wandering around and going out and visiting all the nurses. Everyone knows who he is," she said.

Detroit and Miss Taomia's

father, Tangi Rongo, will be giving her away at the wedding.

Her twin sister, Moana, is a bridesmaid and her six other siblings will be at the wedding.

Her father said he was shocked when Miss Taomia told him she wanted to get married.

"The doctor came out and told us they can't do any more and she turned to me and said, 'What if I don't make it, Dad? I want to get married,'" he said.

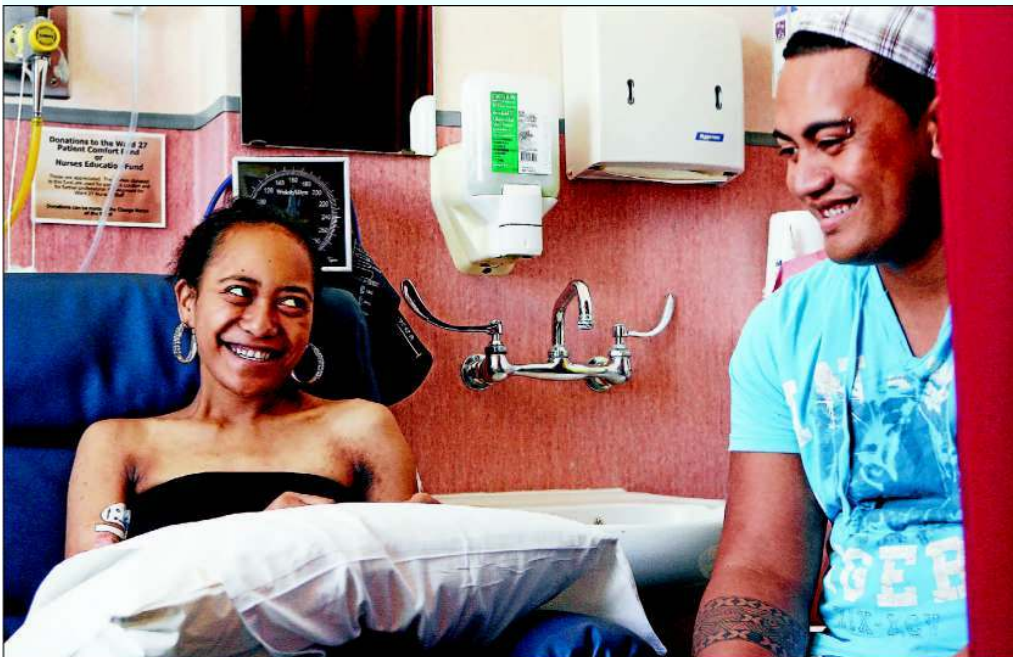
Mr Rongo said the wedding would be "a dream come true" for his daughter.

"It will be an emotional day, my heart is crying all the time but I just want her to be happy and have a smile on her face," he said.

CanTeen, Cancer Society of New Zealand and the Christchurch Millennium Hotel have provided a wedding cake, wedding dress, limousine, photographer and hotel room.

Miss Taomia, who has to eat soft foods, hopes she will be well enough to eat some of her wedding cake.

The Press



Ready to wed: Ashburton cancer sufferer Maire Taomia, 19, and husband-to-be Marouna Tunui, 23. Their wedding today will be "a dream come true" for Miss Taomia who has been told by doctors not to delay doing the things that she wants to do. Photo: RICHARD COSGROVE



Young dying mum gets wish to wed

A bittersweet wedding will be held in Christchurch today to respect the dying wish of a 19-year-old mother.

Maire Taomia, of Ashburton, was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October 2009 and has been in the oncology ward of Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

“Ever since I found out I was diagnosed with cancer I didn’t want to leave the wedding until later. I was planning on waiting until my late 20s to get married, but the doctors don’t think I will make it to that age and told me to do the things I want to do now,” she said.

She was trying not to get too excited before the wedding.

“I don’t want to worry about the little things because tomorrow is just about us,” she said.

Her partner, Marouna Tunui, 23, has been living in the single-bed hospital room with Maire.

He had butterflies in his stomach

about the wedding, he told *The Press* yesterday.

“I want to get married in case something happens to her, so I have something that will remind me of her and remind me of the day that I was married to her,” he said.

The couple have been together for more than two years and have a one-year-old son, Detroit.

Maire said Detroit was the sole reason she had agreed to go through with chemotherapy.

“The doctors said the chemo may keep me here longer and I want to be here with him,” she said.

“I always think I’m going to make it. I always think I’m going to get better.”

Detroit lives with her Ms Taomia’s mother in Ashburton, but visits her often.

Detroit and Ms Taomia’s father, Tangi Rongo, will be giving her away at the wedding. Her twin sis-

ter, Moana, is a bridesmaid and her six other siblings will be at the wedding.

Her father said he was shocked when Maire told him she wanted to get married.

“The doctor came out and told us they can’t do any more and she turned to me and said, ‘what if I don’t make it Dad? I want to get married,’” he said.

Mr Rongo said the wedding would be “a dream come true”.

“It will be an emotional day, my heart is crying all the time but I just want her to be happy and have a smile on her face,” he said.

CanTeen, Cancer Society of New Zealand and the Christchurch Millennium Hotel have donated a wedding cake, a wedding dress, a limousine, a photographer and a hotel room for the honeymoon.



Devoted couple: Marouna Tunui, left, and Maire Taomia.



Wedding 'dream come true' for dying teenager

A bittersweet wedding will be held in Christchurch today to respect the dying wish of a 19-year-old mother.

Maire Taomia, of Ashburton, was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October 2009 and has been in the oncology ward of Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

"Ever since I found out I was diagnosed with cancer I didn't want to leave the wedding until later," she said.

She is trying not to get too excited before the wedding.

"I don't want to worry about the little things because tomorrow is just about us. I am

really happy about it, so happy I want to cry. We are in love," she said.

Her partner, Marouna Tunui, 23, has been living in the single-bed hospital room with Taomia.

The couple have been together for more than two years and have a 1-year-old son, Detroit.

Taomia said Detroit was the sole reason she had agreed to go through with chemotherapy.

"The doctors said the chemo may keep me here longer and I want to be here with him. I want to be here as long as I can for him," she said.

Detroit lives with Maire's mother in Ashburton, but visits

her often.

"He likes wandering around the hospital and going out and visiting all the nurses. Everyone knows who he is," she said.

Taomia's father, Tangi Rongo, said the wedding would be "a dream come true" for his daughter.

The ceremony is being held at St Christopher's Church in Avonhead.

CanTeen, Cancer Society of New Zealand and the Christchurch Millennium Hotel have donated a wedding cake, wedding dress, limousine, photographer and a hotel room for the honeymoon. Fairfax



In love: Cancer sufferer Maire Taomia and her husband-to-be, Marouna Tunui.

Photo: RICHARD COSGROVE



Cancer patient's dream wedding

A bittersweet wedding will be held in Christchurch today to respect the dying wish of a 19-year-old mother.

Maire Taomia, of Ashburton, was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October 2009 and has been in the oncology ward of Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

"Ever since I found out I was diagnosed with cancer I didn't want to leave the wedding until later. I was planning on waiting until my late 20s to get married, but the doctors don't think I will make it to that age and told me to do the things I want to do now," she said.

She was trying not to get too excited before the wedding.

"I don't want to worry about the little things because tomorrow is just about us. I am really happy

about it, so happy I want to cry. We are in love," she said.

Her partner, Marouna Tunui, 23, has been living in the single-bed hospital room with Taomia.

"I want to get married in case something happens to her, so I have something that will remind me of her and remind me of the day that I was married to her."

The couple have been together for over two years and have a one-year-old son, Detroit.

Ms Taomia said Detroit was the sole reason she had agreed to go through with chemotherapy.

"The doctors said the chemo may keep me here longer and I want to be here with him. I want to be here as long as I can for him," she said. "I always think I'm going to make it. I always think I'm going to get better."

Detroit and Ms Taomia's father, Tangi Rongo, will be giving her away at the wedding.

Her twin sister, Moana, is a bridesmaid and her six other siblings will be at the wedding.

Mr Rongo said the wedding would be "a dream come true" for his daughter.

"It will be an emotional day, my heart is crying all the time but I just want her to be happy and have a smile on her face," he said.

CanTeen, the Cancer Society and the Christchurch Millennium Hotel have donated a wedding cake, a wedding dress, a limousine, a photographer and a hotel room for the honeymoon.

The teenager, who has to eat soft foods, is hoping to be well enough to eat some of her wedding cake.



Big day: Ashburton 19-year-old cancer sufferer Maire Taomia, right, will have the wedding of her dreams to Marouna Tunui in Christchurch today after help from Canteen and The Cancer Society.



CANCER PATIENT

A wedding day full of emotion

Olivia Carville

A bittersweet wedding will be held in Christchurch today to respect the dying wish of a 19-year-old mother.

Maire Taomia, of Ashburton, was diagnosed with gastric cancer in October 2009 and has been in the oncology ward of Christchurch Hospital for the past two months.

“Ever since I found out I was diagnosed with cancer I didn’t want to leave the wedding until later. I was planning on waiting until my late 20s to get married, but the doctors don’t think I will make it to that age and told me to do the things I want to do now,” she said.

She was trying not to get too excited before the wedding.

“I don’t want to worry about the little things because tomorrow is just about us. I am really happy about it, so happy I want to cry. We are in love,” she said.

Her partner, Marouna Tunui, 23, has been living in the single-bed hospital room with Taomia. He had butterflies in his stomach

about the wedding, he told The Press yesterday.

“I want to get married in case something happens to her, so I have something that will remind me of her and remind me of the day that I was married to her,” he said.

The couple have been together for over two years and have a one-year-old son, Detroit. Taomia said Detroit was the sole reason she had agreed to go through with chemotherapy.

“The doctors said the chemo may keep me here longer and I want to be here with him. I want to be here as long as I can for him,” she said. “I always think I’m going to make it. I always think I’m going to get better.”

Detroit lives with Taomia’s mother in Ashburton, but visits often.

“He likes wandering around and going out and visiting all the nurses. Everyone knows who he is,” she said.

Detroit and Taomia’s father, Tangi Rongo, will be giving her away at the

wedding. Her twin sister, Moana, is a bridesmaid and her six other siblings will be at the wedding.

Her father said he was shocked when Taomia told him she wanted to get married.

“The doctor came out and told us they can’t do any more and she turned to me and said, ‘what if I don’t make it Dad? I want to get married,’” he said.

Rongo said the wedding would be “a dream come true” for his daughter. “It will be an emotional day. My heart is crying all the time, but I just want her to be happy and have a smile on her face.”

The ceremony is being held at St Christopher’s Church in Avonhead. CanTeen, the Cancer Society of New Zealand and the Christchurch Millennium Hotel have donated a wedding cake, a wedding dress, a limousine, a photographer and a hotel room for the honeymoon.

The teenager, who has to eat soft foods, was hoping she would be well enough to eat some of her wedding cake.



Wedding of her dreams: Maire Toamia, of Ashburton, will marry Marouna Tunui today after CanTeen and the Cancer Society helped make it possible.
Photo: RICHARD COSGROVE