

## 'Help save my life, I'll be your best friend forever'

by Caroline Chick

This is the emotional plea from little Rianna Deol, who urgently needs a bone marrow donor. The six-year-old added: "Give me a chance."



Rianna Deol needs a bone marrow transplant to save her life. Picture: Mundeep Gill

Rianna spent Christmas 2005 in a Great Ormond Street Hospital ward after she was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Since then, Rianna, of Lunedale Road, Dartford, has used every bit of strength to fight the disease with the help of chemotherapy.

This month, the family were due to celebrate the end of Rianna's treatment, but in February, they were handed the devastating news that the battle is not over.

Rianna's disease, a cancer of the white blood cells, has returned

and this time it is even more aggressive.

The High School Musical fan is now in isolation at the London children's hospital and getting weaker by the day. Specialist doctors say Rianna has just four months left to receive a life-saving

bone marrow transplant.

Her family, including her dad Tony and older brother Josh, nine, have all stepped forward to help save this precious life. But in an emotional double blow, a family match cannot be found.

The family have now turned to the community to make a heart-wrenching plea for donors to come forward. Rianna's mother Ravi Deol, 39, said: "It keeps knocking us down and knocking us down and we don't know in what direction to go."

Now the family, with the support of the Anthony Nolan Trust, are holding a series of clinics to give the community the chance to give Rianna the gift of life.

These clinics will be held across Dartford, Belvedere, and Gravesend. Mrs Deol said if a match is found, the procedure to donate is simple and involves a small amount of healthy bone marrow from the donor, which gives the recipient the chance to produce healthy blood cells.

A likely match for Rianna could come from anyone.

Rianna's mum said with 7,000 people waiting for a transplant, they hope the clinics will find a donor for Rianna and other leukaemia sufferers.

She said: "To be able to give someone the gift of life is the most wonderful thing you can do."