

# Find me a match, save

BY CAROLYN KHEW

**T**HEY might have received stares from curious onlookers, but four girls dressed in bridal gowns braved the heat to look for that “special someone” at Raffles Place yesterday.

Using this analogy, they were trying to draw attention to a more sobering fact.

With the odds of finding a bone-marrow donor being one in 20,000, it is perhaps more difficult to find a bone-marrow match than to randomly find that “special someone” on the streets of Singapore.

Even after a match is found, some potential donors back out, said Jane Prior, honorary president of the Bone Marrow Donor Programme (BMDP) – Singapore’s only registry of bone-marrow donors.

Over here, six Singaporeans are diagnosed each day with a blood disease and many of them



**SAY 'I DO':** Ms Prior (centre) with the NJC students (front row) and volunteers from Republic Polytechnic and Singapore Management University yesterday. Their aim was to show how hard it was to find a suitable bone-marrow donor. PHOTO: THE STRAITS TIMES

will die without a bone-marrow transplant. Leukaemia, or blood cancer, is also a leading cause of death for children.

“Blood cancer is not a lifestyle disease. It can come out of nowhere and can hit anybody at any time,” said Ms Prior.

“For patients who don’t get a match, it’s like starving to death

because you can’t get inside the supermarket. We have well-qualified teams to do bone-marrow transplants and the infrastructure is here. It’s just that one missing link (the donors).”

Last year, there were 452 search requests – from both local and overseas patients – but only 45 got a transplant.