



Dear Member,

As the festive season arrives, we send warm Christmas wishes to you and your loved ones, along with every good wish for a happy and hopeful New Year. As we come to the close of 2025, it's a time to look back with pride on a year rich in connection, growth, and shared success across our community. Supporting, empowering, and advocating for individuals with Down syndrome and their families continues to guide all that we do at the Down Syndrome Ireland Louth Meath Branch. This work would not be possible without the commitment and generosity of our members, Committee, volunteers, and supporters. Together, we've shared many special achievements and moments, and we're delighted to reflect on the highlights of the year with you.

Message from our Chair Gillian Dunphy: On behalf of the Committee of the Louth/Meath Branch, I would like to wish all our members, families, and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 2025 has been marked by achievements, celebrations, and an expansion of the activities that we can now offer to our members. Most importantly, I want to thank those of you who have so generously offered up your time and support to fundraise and make possible the wide range of activities that all our members now enjoy. A huge thank you also to the valuable service providers who enable our members to grow and reach their potential. I moved to Kells in 2021 and, since then, have been an active member of the Committee. I took over as Chairperson of the Louth/Meath branch in 2025 and am a proud mam of two boys. My youngest boy, Dillon, has Down Syndrome and is attending his local primary school in Kells. Dillon loves football and music and recently joined his local scouts' group. I heartily welcome our new members who have joined our existing Committee and look forward to working closely with you in the new year. For 2026, we are looking at ways to not only improve but also expand the services and initiatives we offer to members. Amongst them is a speech and Language initiative to be hopefully rolled out in 2026. Suffice to say we are absolutely committed to engaging with all our members in order to identify their priorities and how best to meet their needs. I also want to congratulate Cara Morgan on her new role as Employment Support Specialist and wish her every success in her new position, working alongside our adult members to engage in meaningful job opportunities. In addition, I wish to thank Brendan Stephenson and Mike Egan, who provide invaluable support to the Branch throughout the year.



Figure 1. Gillian Dunphy Branch Chairperson and her Son Dillon

Many thanks
Gillian Dunphy
Chairperson

Early Intervention Programme: One of the most important elements of our child support services is the Early Intervention Home Teacher Programme, which is tailored to support preschool children with Down syndrome, aged 1 to 6, across counties Louth and Meath. This year, 25 children are participating in the Programme. For families facing the challenges of early childhood development, the service offers invaluable, individualised guidance and reassurance. Our Early Intervention Home Teachers visit each child's home every two weeks throughout the school year, amounting to approximately 20 visits annually. As the most resource-demanding service provided by our Branch, this programme has delivered consistent, hands-on support for almost four decades. It remains a distinctive and unmatched service nationwide and is proudly offered free of charge to our members, reflecting our deep commitment to the families we support. We are sincerely grateful to our parent volunteer coordinator, Rhona Lohan, who took over responsibility from Ann Fallon, whose outstanding leadership underpins the programme's continued success. We also extend heartfelt thanks to our Early Intervention Home Teachers, whose dedication and hard work make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families.

Kells Library Children's Book & Crafts Club: Monthly meet up involves listening to stories, creating art and crafts and a chance to read a book if you choose. This group is suitable for 8–12-year-olds.

Adult Education, Latch On: Down Syndrome Ireland continues to work closely with Education and Training Boards(ETBs) to develop Further Education programmes that support school leavers and adults with Down syndrome to achieve their full potential. In June 2025, we were delighted to celebrate a fantastic milestone as our members graduated from the Latch-On programme in Navan. The graduation ceremony, held in conjunction with DSLMB, was a wonderful occasion for participants, families, and supporters alike. Building on this success, Louth and Meath ETB (LMETB), in collaboration with Down Syndrome Ireland and Cara Morgan, Employment Support Specialist, is currently delivering a one-year Work Ready programme for our members in Navan. For more information, please contact: Cara Morgan, Employment Support Specialist on caramorgan@downsyndrome.ie or 087 163 6736



Figure 2. Daniel, Pierce, Emer, Daragh, Paul, David, and Kate graduating from the Latch-On programme in Navan

Members volunteering with DSI: Our former Chairman, Paul Radford, continues to serve on the board of Down Syndrome Ireland. A big thank you to Paul for volunteering again this year.

Funding Scheme: We're delighted to announce that the Funding Scheme is back for 2025! The scheme supports therapies and sports or recreational activities that benefit our members with Down syndrome. Application forms have been sent to all members by email, and further information, including terms and conditions, is available on our website.

Parent Link: Down Syndrome Ireland Louth Meath runs Parent Link, a voluntary support network that offers guidance and essential information to new parents of babies with Down syndrome in Louth, Meath, and surrounding areas. As parents of children with Down syndrome ourselves, and trained by Down Syndrome Ireland, we understand first-hand the emotions and experiences that come with welcoming a child with Down syndrome into your family. We are here to offer support, understanding, and reassurance throughout this journey. New parents living in County Louth or Meath are warmly encouraged to get in touch. Contact Sirpa Makinen on 086 861 4970 or Eleanor Cosgrove on 087 667 1393.

Employment Support: We are delighted to welcome and congratulate our new Employment Support Specialist, Cara Morgan. Since joining the Branch, Cara has



Figure 3. Luke Halpin begins his employment Journey in Lidl Trim

been extremely busy supporting members who are already in employment, while also helping others secure new paid roles within their local communities. Our members are currently thriving in workplaces such as Specsavers, the Pillo Hotel, the D Hotel, SuperValu, and The Fairways Hotel. Through the Down Syndrome Ireland Employment Programme, Cara has also supported members into roles with LIDL, Grafton Barbers, and a local Dance Studio. Looking ahead, agreements are already in place for exciting new employment opportunities in the New Year, including positions in the Trim Castle Hotel, a local pharmacy, a hair salon, and the Circle K network, for some fantastic branch members. Cara visited Dundalk in December and is looking forward to extending the Employment Support Programme to North County Louth in 2026. Feedback from employers has been overwhelmingly positive, with businesses reporting that employing a young person with Down syndrome has been a very rewarding experience for their entire team. Most importantly, our members tell us how much they enjoy having meaningful paid employment—and as many proudly say, “Cash is king!” We look forward to 2026 and to supporting many more employment successes for our adult members. Cara is available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Contact: caramorgan@downsyndrome.ie, 087 1636736.



Figure 4. Michelle Whelehan helping people to see clearly in Specsavers



Figure 5. Cara Morgan Employment Support Specialist

Regional Advisory Council: The 12-member Regional Advisory Council had a very busy year with 9 meetings during the year. Chairperson Michelle and Secretary Eleanor also attended all the branch committee meetings. Members commiserated on the loss of our former DSI CEO, Nicola Aylward and the father of Eileen Dunne, Seamus Dunne, who was a founding member of DSI. Social events over the year included a Panto trip in January, a Valentine's disco party and a World Down Syndrome Day celebration. Members assisted with the Knightsbrook Fashion Show, Spinathon and Meath Rose fundraisers. RAC Members also met the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, in Government Buildings on World Down Syndrome Day. During the year, RAC Member Fintan Bray took on the role of interim chairperson of the DSI National Advisory Council. A special presentation was made to Timofii Semenuk



Figure 6. The RAC meeting in the Conyngham Arms Slane

from Ukraine, who won the Ukrainian national Lots of Socks art competition. Two candidates, Eleanor Murray and Dúalta Callan, are going forward for election to the role of international ambassador for Down Syndrome Ireland. The successful candidate will be replacing retiring Ambassador and RAC member Eileen Dunne in the role.

Speech & Drama/Social Skills Club: Our Speech and Drama Club in Drogheda continues to go from strength to strength, with weekly sessions taking place every Saturday morning at the Barbican Centre. The club provides a wonderful opportunity for our members to make new friendships, grow in confidence, and develop their social and communication skills in a fun and supportive environment. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to Audrey Jackson for her continued dedication in keeping the club running, and to our Drama teacher, Ali McLoughlin, whose inspiring work makes each session so special.

Warrior Wolves: Elisha Gallagher and Liam Foley represented Ireland at the 8th edition of the European Down Syndrome Athletics Championships (IAADS) in Prague in July 25. Liam runs with Trim Athletics Club in Meath, & won an astonishing haul of 3 medals, 2 gold and one bronze. Already a European and World champion, Liam successfully defended his European titles in both the 800m and 1,500m finals, and added a third-place finish in the 400m. Elisha, who runs with Metro St. Brigid's Club in Dublin, posted a personal best (PB) time in the 100m and qualified for the 200m final, where she also posted a PB as she finished as the 6th fastest European. In Futsal, Jamie Linden, Micheál McCloy, and Fergus Cosgrove, three incredible members of our branch, represented Ireland at the



Figure 9. Elisha Gallagher & Liam Foley heading to Prague to compete in the European Down Syndrome Athletics Championships in July

European Down Syndrome Futsal Championships in Feterra, Italy, this June, bringing home 3rd place! We are so proud to have these talented and dedicated athletes in our branch! The FAI, in conjunction with the League of Ireland Clubs, including Drogheda United and Dundalk FC, run Futsal teams. Thank you to an amazing bunch of volunteers attached to the Drogheda Futsal group... Aoife, Trish and Brian who make our Tuesday evening training fun, lighthearted, physically challenging and very geared towards team building. Thank you for being so generous with your time. The lads have had a great experience this year. Looking forward to 2026. The Drogheda Futsal happens on a Tuesday at 6:30 pm in the Special Olympics



Figure 8. Jamie Linden, Micheál McCloy, and Fergus Cosgrove represented Ireland at the European Down Syndrome Futsal Championships in Feterra, Italy



Figure 7. Drogheda United Futsal group meeting for Tuesday Training

hall in Drogheda.

Artistic Swimming: 2025 has been another busy and highly successful year for our Artistic Swimming group, now proudly in its fourth year of training. The group trains weekly at the Aura Health and Leisure Centre in Trim, and we are very grateful to the Down Syndrome Ireland Louth/Meath Branch for their continued financial support. Currently, 11 swimmers train with the group each week, enjoying the sport while improving their fitness and developing increasingly complex artistic swimming skills. Since September, we have also welcomed a local Transition Year student, Erin, who joins the group weekly. A strong swimmer eager to build her skills, Erin has been

a fantastic support to our coach, Aoife, both on poolside and in the water. One of the highlights of the year was when four swimmers attended a three-day training camp at the renowned Marlborough College in England. The swimmers greatly benefited from the intensive training and outstanding facilities, with a swimming display held on the final day. Fundraising efforts were equally impressive, including a Spinathon in February, which raised €1,759 over a 12-hour period, supported by swimmers and parents alike. We were also grateful to receive a €300 grant from Meath County Council in September, and to Eamon Bray for organising a President's Bridge Night in Mullingar, raising over €1,800. Alongside training and competition, the group also enjoyed a busy social calendar, including a trip to Trim Musical, a summer party and meal at the Castle Arch Hotel, and many shared celebrations. At the summer event, our coach highlighted a positive achievement for each swimmer, providing wonderful encouragement and motivation. We now look forward to our Christmas party in Broghans, along with a new Secret Santa initiative. Planning is already underway for an exciting three-day training camp in Clongowes Wood College, where we will host Team GB and their coaches. Many of our swimmers are also preparing to compete in the Special Olympics Games in June, taking part in kayaking, swimming, and athletics, with Liam representing at the DS World Championships. We wish everyone the very best of luck. Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to our highly professional coach, Aoife Drumm. Her dedication, leadership, and organisation are at the heart of the group's success, and her ongoing work throughout the year—creating videos showcasing skills, routines, and formations—has been invaluable. It is truly a pleasure to work alongside her.

Mindfulness programme: The mindfulness course ran this November again for our Adult members and was a great



Figure 10. Kate, Lucie, Adam & Tomas practicing Mindfulness

success. Participants began by exploring some essential oils. They then made daily positive affirmation jars. Each participant chose a positive affirmation from The Blossoming Heart for their jar each week. Participants also made hand lotion with their chosen oils. They also took turns being the therapist and client and did their Indian Head Massage routine, which they had learned. It was great getting hands-on, practical experience. Each session ended with a lovely meditation. The course ended with the presentation of certificates and goodie bags.

"It has been an honour to work alongside these young adults who brought so much of themselves to the course. Ann (Therapist)"

A heartfelt thank you goes to Maura Colleran for her dedication in organising and facilitating the Programme.



Figure 11. Katie & Lucy doing their Indian Head Massage

Regional Resource Officer: Our Regional Resource Officer, Mike Egan, is here to help people with Down syndrome and their families access support locally. 2024 has been a very busy year in the branch, across a number of different fronts. One of the very significant challenges which has arisen in the course of the year has been support for member families who have more recently arrived in the country. Many of these families have left horrendous, war-torn situations in their own home countries and have arrived in Ireland traumatised with little or no support. While we know that our own Irish disability support system has very significant flaws and delays, it is still well advanced compared to many other countries. It is very encouraging to see our membership, our schools and other official bodies welcoming and assisting these new arrivals. At a time like Christmas, it's not easy being far away from home and we are all reminded of a time when there was "No Room in the Inn" for other weary travelers. Our See and Learn library has been very active this year with parents taking out and swapping See and Learn kits as their children have progressed in their speech and language learning. Don't forget that we have kits available and please contact Mike for details. This is also an opportunity to recognise the work and support that we get from many frontline

staff in schools, colleges, the HSE, Tulsa, Inclusion Ireland and the DSI National Office among others. While systems and support services are still not at the level they should be for our members and their families that is not to say that a lot of frontline staff in the services are working very hard in difficult circumstances. We will continue to advocate for additional resources that are desperately needed to provide essential services and ease the pressure on both our parents and the frontline workers supporting our members. A special note of congratulations is due to the members and officers of our Regional Advisory Council. Over the past year, a further 5 DSI branches have followed the RAC model of the Louth Meath branch. We look forward to the day when every branch of DSI in the country will have a regional advisory council for adult members to formally advocate for their own wishes and choices. Regional Resource Officers provide vital support and a point of contact for new parents as well as families who need help and support at a local level at every life stage. Mike can be contacted on 085 8618866 or mike@downsyndrome.ie.

Fun with Numbers: This year, we were delighted to continue our Fun with Numbers (FWN) programme, an engaging online workshop that makes learning maths enjoyable through games and creative activities. The programme supports the development of essential number skills such as counting, addition, and subtraction, while also introducing multiplication and division in a practical and accessible way. Running twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays, the workshops focus on real-life applications, including cooking, measurements, time, journey planning, and money skills. Sessions are offered for two age groups, 8–11 years and 12+, with flexibility to accommodate participants where possible. Our sincere thanks to Deirdre Myler for her ongoing dedication in delivering these excellent workshops. For further information or to express interest, please contact info@louthmeath.downsyndrome.ie.

Fun with Fitness programme: Our Fun with Fitness programme continues to provide a comprehensive fitness experience for our adult members at Kilmainham GFC. Each Thursday, members take part in enjoyable keep-fit sessions, following tailored instructions from our two fantastic fitness instructors, Kelly and Paul. Fitbits are used to support and enhance the sessions, helping members stay motivated and engaged. A heartfelt thank you to Cara Morgan for her dedication in organising and maintaining the programme.



Figure 12. Emily, Dylan & Sophie working out



Figure 13. Lucy, Paul & Cormac being put through their paces

Family Fun Day: Our annual Family Fun Day & BBQ, held at Newgrange Farm in Slane on 7th September, was a fantastic success. After a wet start to the morning, the clouds cleared and families enjoyed a wonderful day of fun, relaxation, and connection. The event provided a welcome opportunity for members to come together as summer drew to a close and children prepared to return to school. We extend our sincere thanks to Paul Radford for his excellent organisation and dedication, which helped create a joyful day and a strong sense of community for all who attended.

Aquafit: During the Summer, Christmas, and Easter holidays, we continue to offer Aquafit Bootcamp sessions at Aura Swimming Pool in Trim. These sessions provide an invigorating mix of fitness, music, and fun. Led by the dynamic instruction of Eleanor Murray, one of our dedicated adult members, the classes offer a lively and enjoyable fitness experience. Participants love exercising in the water to great music and following Eleanor's guidance throughout each session. After the workout, members can relax and unwind with time in the Jacuzzi, adding a welcome element of relaxation to the programme. A heartfelt thank you to Eleanor Murray for her enthusiasm and commitment, and to Cara Morgan for her dedication in organising and maintaining the programme. Contact Cara Morgan for more details.



Figure 14. Eleanor Murray leading Aquafit

Sensory fun with Orla McFeely: The group commenced in September. A sensory fun morning with Orla McFeely consisting of fun, games, music and activities including scarf juggling, ribbon dancing and lots more! To make the morning enjoyable for everyone, the event will be split into two sessions. The first hour is calm & quiet (no loud music) and the second hour is more upbeat & lively with music. Families are welcome to join for the hour that best suits them, or stay and enjoy both! The group is held monthly in the Barbican Centre, Drogheda, Co Louth.



Figure 16. Sensory Fun with Orla

Book club: Once a month, our adult members enjoy a book club in Navan library. Our **"Stay Up All Night"** book club has been a huge success, reviewing and



Figure 15. Stay Up All Night Book Club

discussing books, meeting authors, participating in workshops, and partaking in

writing workshops. An open invitation is extended to all adult members interested in joining this vibrant literary community. The group not only enjoys spirited discussions and laughter but also indulges in snacks while keeping abreast of the latest bestsellers. It's a captivating blend of literary exploration, cinematic enjoyment, and camaraderie that continues to thrive each month. At the end of the year, Stay up All Night Nook Club we had author Eilish Fisher visit with her award-winning books. We are looking forward to 2026. A heartfelt thank you goes to Cara Morgan for her dedication in organising and maintaining the Programme.

Cupcake Gang: Some action photos of our young adults at the recent cupcake gang meet up in the Arc, Navan, for Bowling. We try to meet on the second Sunday of the month for bowling. Age group 15 -17. A chance for our young adults to socialise, expand on friends and play bowling. It is also a chance for parents to meet and chat. Always open to new members. The next get-together is on January 11th. Contact info@louthmeath.downsyndrome.ie.



Figure 17. Cupcake Gang meeting up



Figure 18. Cupcake Gang Bowling

Golf in Ashbourne: The Tigers are our enthusiastic group of budding golfers, meeting every Saturday at 10am at Ashbourne Golf Club under the expert guidance of Ciaran, our resident coach. The sessions are relaxed, fun, and welcoming, offering members the chance to develop their skills while enjoying the game in a friendly environment. New members are always welcome—who knows where your golfing journey might lead! Anyone for golf?



Figure 19. The Tigers fitting in a quick 18 holes



Figure 20. Perfecting my Swing

Coffee Morning Get-Togethers: We host quarterly Coffee Morning Get-Togethers at the Huckleberry Den in Navan, providing a relaxed and welcoming space for parents and children to meet, connect, and enjoy time together. These gatherings are typically held on Sundays from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm and offer a fun, informal environment for families to catch up. Our sincere thanks to Gillian Dunphy for organising these popular meetups. For further information, please email info@louthmeath.downsyndrome.ie or follow us on social media for updates.

Sibling Workshops Sibshops: Throughout the year, we hosted Sibling Workshops at Drogheda Presbyterian Church and Athboy Convent Community Centre. We extend our sincere thanks to Liz Fitzpatrick and Linda Foley for their valued support and expertise. As experienced nurses specialising in intellectual disability and qualified Sibshop Facilitators, they delivered engaging and supportive workshops for siblings aged 7 to 13 of children with additional needs. The sessions provided a fun and welcoming space where siblings could connect, share experiences, and



Figure 21. Sibshop discussion



Figure 22. Sibling Workshop Drogheda, Group Work

explore both the challenges and positives of having a brother or sister with special needs, fostering understanding and meaningful connections. Look out for our upcoming Sibshops in the new year. For more information, contact us at info@louthmeath.downsyndrome.ie.

Saturday Club: Launched in 2016, the Saturday Club continues to flourish in 2025 as a vital social space for members aged 15–18. Founded by families, the club provides a much-valued break from the routines of therapy and education, offering a relaxed and enjoyable setting where young people can simply have fun. From bowling outings to shared meals, the club creates lasting memories and meaningful connections. Sincere thanks go to Sandra Allen for her continued dedication in organising and sustaining the club, ensuring our members experience friendship, enjoyment, and special moments together.



Figure 23. The Saturday Club going bowling

Down Syndrome Awareness Campaign: To mark Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October, we were delighted to launch a vibrant social media campaign celebrating the uniqueness and achievements of our wonderful community members. Throughout the month, we proudly featured at least one of our amazing members each day, highlighting their individuality, accomplishments, and the joy they bring to our Branch. This campaign provided a meaningful platform to raise awareness, promote inclusion, and challenge stereotypes surrounding Down syndrome. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to share the inspiring stories and personalities that make our community so special.

Branch AGM: Set in the beautiful surroundings of the Conyngham Arms Hotel in Slane, our Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place this May and marked an important milestone in planning for the year ahead. At the meeting, our Branch Officers and Committee members were elected, forming a dedicated and enthusiastic leadership team for Down Syndrome Ireland Louth Meath Branch. We had to say goodbye to some of our dedicated Committee members who had more that served their time on the Committee and for the branch and welcome some new members to the Committee. Comprised of committed parent volunteers, the committee meets monthly to carefully plan, develop, and strengthen branch activities and services. We extend our sincere thanks to our Branch Officers and Committee members for their continued dedication, hard work, and invaluable support of our branch.

Fun with Art programme: Coordinated by Cara Morgan, members took part in a 10-week mixed media arts programme, culminating in a trip to the River Boyne and a wonderful exhibition of their work at the Solstice Arts



Figure 26. Lucie's wonderful Art



Figure 24. Presenting the Art



Figure 25. A selection of Art from Fun with Art

Centre. Participants greatly enjoyed the weekly sessions, and we were all very proud of the final exhibition. For further information, please contact Cara Morgan.

Dance Class: The adult dance group in Drogheda continues to run on Saturday afternoons, providing a fun and engaging activity for participants. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Audrey O'Dowd and Monique McGivern for their ongoing commitment to the group, and to our talented dance teacher, Frances Byrne, for her inspiring work with the dancers. For more information, contact us at info@louthmeath.downsyndrome.ie.

Christmas Party: Our Children's Christmas Party, held on December 7th at the beautiful Trim Castle Hotel, was a joyful success for children aged 0–13. Santa delighted the young attendees with gifts, spreading smiles and festive cheer. Huge thanks to the organisers, the Committee of Down Syndrome Ireland Louth Meath Branch, and to Santa's Elves: Julie O'Brien, Dualta Callan, Luke Halpin, Katie Radford, Alli Tolan, Ann Fallon, Mike & Shane Egan on the Camera, and Paul Radford. Special thanks to Maura Collieran for helping Santa source all the children's presents.

On the day we enjoyed: The Brickx Club with Sarah Jane Doyle, Sensory Fun with Orla McFeely, Music by DJ Philmeister, A Mini Market with Insil Byrne and her crew. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make it such a magical festive afternoon!



Figure 27. Santa making a visit to the Children's Christmas Party

World Down Syndrome Day: In commemoration of World Down Syndrome Day, the Louth/Meath Branch organised two wonderful events to celebrate inclusion and community. On Friday, 21st March 2025, we marked the occasion with a fantastic evening at Balreask Bar & Restaurant in Navan, bringing together members of the local community for a lively night of music, awareness, and inclusion. The band Out on Bale provided excellent live music, keeping the dance floor busy throughout the evening. A great sense of solidarity was evident, with many attendees proudly wearing mismatched socks in support of the day. With free entry and generous donations on the night, the event was a great success and truly reflected the spirit of community and inclusion. Celebrations continued on Saturday, 22nd March, with a cheerful "Fun and Games with Orla" event held in the Donnelly Room at The Barbican, Drogheda. Families enjoyed a relaxed and inclusive afternoon, with Orla leading a fun-filled session of activities such as scarf juggling and ribbon dancing, suitable for children up to their early teens. Parents and carers had the opportunity to enjoy tea, coffee, and biscuits while catching up and connecting with one another. Despite busy schedules, many families took the time to drop in and celebrate the day, making it a warm, enjoyable, and successful celebration of World Down Syndrome Day.

Adult Social Activities: Our Adult and older teen members had many parties and outings during the year, with highlights being the Christmas Party & the fabulous trip to the "Peter Pan" Panto in the Gaiety Theatre. The outings are discussed and planned by the Regional Advisory Council and are organised with the help of Eleanor Cosgrove.



Figure 28. On the Bus, Heading to the Panto



Figure 29. Heading to the Panto

Rainbow Buddies: Rainbow Buddies is suitable for members aged 6–12 years old. We organise monthly outings which include Pantos, circus, movies and lots more. It is a fun social gathering for our younger members and their families. Some highlights were a cinema outing at Halloween to see Hotel Transylvania, Attending Panto productions in November for the Special hands production – The Greatest Showman, and our next event is in February to see Pinocchio. Thank you to Gillian Dunphy for organising Rainbow Buddies. Email infodslmb@gmail.com or check out our social media for more details.

Fundraising: Fundraising continues to be a challenge, and 2025 was no exception. However, thanks to the dedication and generosity of our community, we were once again supported by a fantastic range of fundraising activities throughout the year. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who organised fundraisers for the Branch, particularly those linked to events such as the Mini Marathon, Dublin City Marathon, birthdays, and many other occasions. Your efforts truly make a meaningful difference. We are also deeply grateful to all who donated so generously during the year. Members are reminded that our Branch Fundraising page on [idonate](#) remains available for anyone wishing to set up their own fundraising event in support of the Branch. Finally, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our Fundraising Officer, Maura Colleran, whose commitment and hard work led to the successful organisation of numerous events, including bag packs and bucket collections.

As we come to the close of 2025, we extend our heartfelt thanks to every member, volunteer, supporter, and partner who has contributed so much to the Down Syndrome Ireland Louth/Meath Branch throughout the year. Your generosity, enthusiasm, and commitment have made 2025 a truly special year for our Branch. We would like to offer a particular word of thanks to our dedicated Branch Committee, whose hard work and continued support make a lasting difference to our members and families. As we look ahead with hope and excitement to 2026, we do so with gratitude for all we have achieved together. Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. 🌲 ✨

