



# **Linking Generations NI Christmas Connections Small Grant Scheme 2024 Report**



# Introduction

With funding support from the Public Health Agency, Linking Generations NI were delighted once again to be able to award 30 small grants of £125 each, in late 2024, to enable festive intergenerational activities to happen right across Northern Ireland in the month of December. The grants scheme was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 to mark Positive Ageing Month in NI and the response to the opportunity was overwhelming, with more than 110 grant applications received!

## Impact of Grants

These grants act as a catalyst to create sustainable connections in bringing older and younger people together. The impact of these connections is detailed below, but as well as creating new opportunities, it also builds confidence and expertise among facilitators to develop and implement intergenerational projects. At least one group/organisation from all eleven NI council areas were successful in their application, resulting with every part of the province availing of this funding opportunity.

So many new connections were made with a total of 1295 participants, from nursery age to 80+, taking part in intergenerational activities! This report highlights that the benefits and knock on effects have been huge for the people who took part, the community leaders who developed the activities and the groups/organisations and settings that hosted them!

This evaluation report also details the activities and feedback from those involved (244 Participants and 27 group leaders were surveyed).

## Some Vital Stats!

Our evaluation responses show that through developing connections with people of another generation in their community and taking part in the Christmas Connections intergenerational activity, participants felt more connected to their community, welcomed and respected and were keen to engage in further intergenerational activity!

- **93%** stated that as a result of their involvement they now felt more connected to their community
- **93%** said they felt welcomed and well-treated
- **95%** stated that as a result they would like to do something with a different age group again



# The Headline Findings for Groups & Participants

## Intergenerational Benefits – What participants told us!

### Reducing ageism:

- “People of all ages like to enjoy themselves.”
- “We share the same problems about similar challenges.”
- “I used to mind children. They made me believe I am not too old/past it.”

### Lessening stereotypes:

- “The young people were very helpful and good mannered.”
- “We are all the same! We enjoy the cheer and good will Christmas brings people.”
- “The young children were very mature and polite in their interactions and conversations.”

### More Cohesive Communities:

- “Joyce and Jean were so cool and I found out they are my great aunts.”
- “I enjoyed meeting new people and getting closer to the older generation.”
- “The participation of younger people in this musical Christmas event not only added to the great experience but enhanced the terrific community spirit.”

### Mutual Benefits and Respect:

- “It was good to have visitors to talk to.”
- “It was really good and made me feel a lot better.”
- “Would love to see the children again as it made me happy.”

***We loved the feedback from our Christmas Connections participants!***



## Comments from the Project Leaders about what they had learned included:

- *“We learnt that everyone enjoys celebrating Christmas, regardless of age. We learnt that people really appreciate the sense of community that an event like this can bring and that bringing people of all ages together has benefits for the mental and social health of both young and old.”*
- *“This event provided a great social opportunity for our residents and the pupils involved, some of which have social struggles. Everyone got involved and enjoyed being together. I have seen the pupil’s confidence grow as they have spent time with our residents and some residents have been encouraged out of their room to socialise when they would not normally do this.”*
- *“I learned and observed how beneficial it is for our young people to engage with and make friends with those who are older than them. Everyone had fun together, confidence and self-belief within themselves improved and both our young people and elderly felt connected, part of a community and people who cared for and took an interest in them.”*



## Feedback from Project Leaders

The projects funded not only provided great learning for the young and older people taking part, but also for those who planned, organised and delivered the initiatives. We have highlighted their feedback under each of the 8 core principles that our intergenerational work adheres to (Pinto et al, 2009).

### **1. Mutually and reciprocally beneficial** - each generation participating learns with and from each other. Project leaders told us:

- *“Everyone who attended seemed to really enjoy the event and it seemed like all the age groups involved appeared to benefit. By the amount of people willing to attend and the verbal feedback, participants seem keen to be involved in this type of event. People really felt included and their voices heard and valued.”*

### **2. Participatory** - based on the aspirations and needs of those participating. Project leaders told us:

- *“The two generations mixed incredibly well. They had lots of lovely conversations and learned a lot from one another. There were more conversations and genuine interest in each other than I may have expected and I was delighted to hear all the positive feedback and the praise from both generations on how enjoyable it was. I hope we can do this again soon and build on our new friendships.”*

### **3. Assets based** - working with the generations to help them to discover their strengths. Project leaders told us:

- *“Bringing generations together brings so many benefits for all age groups, from improving mental health by uplifting moods, encouraging engagement which builds social and communication skills, learning about respect, empathy, kindness and the importance of these life skills.”*

### **4. Well planned** - project leaders told us:

- *“We learned that these activities provide social and emotional benefits for both the residents and the children. The children gained valuable life experiences and further understanding of aging, while the residents experienced increased social interaction, improved mood and a chance to reminiscence. We also learned the importance of careful planning and clear communication between the care home and the school to ensure the success of the activities.”*

**5. Culturally grounded** - tailored to the individual needs, context and attitudes of those participating. Project leaders told us:

- *“The importance of giving people time and space to chat and socialise irrespective of age. The children and the older guests all benefitted in different ways.”*

**6. Strengthening community bonds** - promote active citizenship. Project leaders told us:

- *“Some of the residents said it was lovely to feel part of the community and not forgotten about when you are in a care home. I learnt about the importance of the residents feeling part of the local community and for them to share stories from yesteryear.”*

**7. Challenges ageism** - Project leaders told us:

- *“With children there is no age barrier and they do not see the disabilities and for our residents, it brought back memories of playing with their own children and grandchildren and in cases great grandchildren.”*

**8. Cross-disciplinary** -providing a vehicle for broadening the experience of professionals and encourage more inclusive working. Project leaders told us:

- *“Linking generations and community spirit is very important for going forward.”*

**LGNl are delighted that as a result of involvement....**







## Foundations of Wellbeing

LGNI's small grants scheme always showcases fantastic work and gives evidence to support the impact of intergenerational approaches to address health and wellbeing, social isolation, loneliness and improve **Community Connections**. **100 %** of participating groups and individuals practiced at least one foundation for wellbeing:

### **Give:**

- All projects involved an element of mutual volunteering: older people share with younger people and younger people with older.

### **Be Active:**

- Many projects involved physical movement - dancing, singing, moving about displays and making things.

### **Take Notice:**

- Participants may have taken more notice of the world because the event was out of the ordinary for them.

### **Keep Learning:**

- Across the projects older people explained things like Christmas traditions, recipes and old games to young people who discovered these 'new' things and in return helped older people learn about their lives and re-discover the enthusiasm of youth.

### **Connect:**

- Participants connected with new people of different ages and expressed huge desire to keep connecting.

The evidenced outcomes of **Christmas Connections grants** activities and alignment with the Foundations of Wellbeing also contributes to the building of an **Age-friendly Northern Ireland** particularly within the themes of respect and social inclusion and social participation. Considering the number of schools and education settings involved, they make a considerable contribution to the **Department for Education's Every School a Good School Policy** by supporting the establishment of school links with the community. The high numbers of Care Home settings involved aligns Christmas Connections grants outcomes with the achievement of The **Department of Health Care Home Standards** relating to Contact with Family, Friends and the Local Community.

# The Christmas Connections Activities!



## Massford Project Association

Christmas Connections - Christmas Traditional Music Evening for All Ages - 6/12/24 We prepared for the event by promoting the evening in a variety of ways reaching out to families and all the generations; festive refreshments were arranged. We hosted our Christmas Traditional Music Evening with a sing-along around the tree and a countdown to the lights switch on by one of the younger children. Crackers were pulled by everyone and we encouraged pulling a cracker with someone you didn't know. Christmas songs, music, jokes and poetry filled the evening. Festive supper was served with sandwiches/warm mince pies and cream/shortbread and sweets. Tea/coffee and juice was served. Small selection boxes were given out to each child who attended. Everyone had the opportunity to sing and play solo or together/to tell a joke/recite a

story or a poem in a supportive, friendly atmosphere. Older persons joined in on the chorus with younger performers and vice versa. The age range of those part was from nursery to 80plus years - more men attend as regular musicians. Children, parents and grandparent and neighbours and friends attended. The benefits included more social mixing between the generations; a fun, warm and festive evening appropriate for all ages; a greater sense of connection with all those attending and keeping alive music and social/cultural traditions. We plan to repeat this event with the focus on bringing the generations together through the medium of music and fun, social interactions.

**6 younger and 33 older people took part.**

## Scotch Street Youth & Community Centre

We had an amazing event with the young people from SSYCC and the Rural Community Association, which truly celebrated intergenerational connection. The teens and elderly participants came together to enjoy a variety of activities, including board games, VR headsets, and delicious treats like doughnuts, cookies, mince pies, hot chocolate, and tea. One of the highlights of the day was the Christmas bauble-making activity, where young and old worked side by side, getting creative and sharing stories. Participants also shared their cherished Christmas traditions, including a touching moment when Helena brought out the doll she had received 70 years ago for Christmas; a poignant reminder of the holiday's deep meaning.

The event was a resounding success, and many elderly participants asked if they could meet again the following week. It was clear how much they valued the opportunity to connect with the younger generation. This funding helped us realize how effective intergenerational work can be in the area, and we aim to keep working on this. Everyone agreed it had been a meaningful and enjoyable experience. The young people stepped out of their comfort zones to engage with the older participants, and their efforts were truly inspiring. We are incredibly proud of all who took part and look forward to continuing to build these valuable connections in the future.



**6 younger and 10 older people took part.**





## Ochill Cultural Group

Our organisation brought children, young people, parents, grandparents and older people together from the various groups that use our community facility for a Christmas Connections event. The event included festive food, music, an inter-generational Christmas quiz, which got young and old talking and working together, Christmas carols played on the accordion by the children and young people of our musical tuition classes, party games and a small gift for attendees. Children and young people from our accordion musical tuition classes, played Christmas carols on the accordion, ladies from the flower arranging group attended and prepared the food, the men's group assisted with the preparation

of the hall and a few people from another local community attended. The benefits of being involved and bringing generations together through this fun event, included building connections between generations, increasing understanding that everyone, regardless of age, enjoys celebrating Christmas and an appreciation among our children and young people of Christmas past and the spirit of Christmas, giving to others. For the older people who attended, this event provided social interactions and connections, promoted a sense of community and helped to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation, which are experienced by many in our rural community. For young and old, this was a lovely opportunity to spend time together, get to know people of different generations, appreciate and value Christmas traditions, giving to others and overall benefiting mental and social wellbeing.

**22 younger and 24 older people took part.**

## Prospect Private Nursing Home

On 16/12 we hosted an 'Intergenerational Christmas Party' with some pupils and their teachers from Slemish College. During our time together pupils helped our residents with a Christmas craft, enjoyed some delicious food and played some festive games. We had a gift exchange also and the pupils thoughtfully picked some gifts personal to our residents as they have become familiar with them throughout their time visiting us. We are hoping that into 2025 we are able to maintain the relationships that have already blossomed and this intergenerational link can continue.



This event provided a great social opportunity for our residents and the pupils involved, some of which have social struggles. Everyone got involved and enjoyed being together. I have seen the pupil's confidence grow as they have spent time with our residents and some residents have been encouraged out of their room to socialise when they would not normally do this.

**8 younger and 22 older people took part.**

## Six Mile Integrated Primary School



For this project the children in Six Mile IPS Specialist Provision Learning class completed some work with the residents and staff of Oriel House Residential Home in Antrim. We deliberately choose this setting as they have small numbers and don't often get the opportunity to participate in these types of projects and also the children in our Specialist Provision Learning class are children with a statement of Special Educational Needs and other medical needs. For our project we planned to visit the home for a Christmas craft morning. Then the residents were invited to come and visit us for a dress rehearsal

of our Christmas concert. The children, residents and staff enjoyed the project immensely. The children, staff and residents talked, told stories, sang and together they completed crafts which we made into a canvas which we presented to the residents along with hampers and a card. Everyone enjoyed the project and the feedback was very positive from all who participated. We hope to plan a project together for term 3 when we would like to do an outdoor project.

**8 younger and 15 older people took part.**

## Head Injury Support

We invited a local secondary school, Our Lady's Newry choir, to come and to connect with our Head Injury Survivors at our Centre in Newry. Our groups come weekly but it is rare that the whole group gets together. We used the grant to pay for an extra bus to bring two groups from outreach and the Newry group. After consulting survivors and staff we decided to have an icebreaker quiz with the students and the survivors mixing. The quiz was mostly general questions but we also asked them to find out from each other what the most challenging thing about was being a

teenager today and what was most challenging about being a Head Injury Survivor. In the end this was a very engaging part of the day and a lot of the survivors and students spoke about this in the evaluation. The event itself went very smoothly; we mixed the students with survivors and they all sat down with the Icebreaker quiz to start. The students were very good participants and had us all laughing when they were invited to take off a shoe and dance with it. Then it was over to the Our Lady's choir who sang for the group and impressed us with their skills in performing and skills. The benefits included the interactions between the survivors and the students and the things they could relate to each other on. The links between these groups and across the generations are priceless as well as growth in understanding of the impact of Brain Injury and the challenges teenagers face.



**20 younger and 35 older people took part.**





## Steeple Nursery School

A class (24) of preschool age children visited Massereene Manor Nursing Home. We went over on two days; half the class went one day and the other half the other day. We walked over, with the help of three parents each day. We took a range of percussion instruments and a collection of Christmas story books. We sang some Christmas songs while playing our instruments and the residents joined in either through clapping, singing and doing actions. We then shared our story books with the residents and talked about the pictures. Natural

conversation then took place between the residents, children, parents and staff. We wanted to spread Christmas cheer and start building up an intergenerational partnership. We certainly plan to visit again and further develop this relationship.

**24 younger and 16 older people took part.**

## Little Folk Playgroup

At the start of December our preschoolers invited grandparents and other family members to "Stay and Play" at our Christmas Connections event. This involved making lots of different Christmas crafts together- from making wreaths to decorating Santas. We also looked at a loan box from Newry Museum which contained toys and Christmas items from years gone by. We also all enjoyed some Christmas treats eg mince pies and also Christmas music. The children and grandparents/carers really enjoyed working on some Christmas crafts together, and it gave both groups the opportunity to share skills and knowledge that they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to do. The children had a sense of pride showing off their school environment to their grandparents, and the grandparents were able to share their own school experiences. The Christmas themed loan box generated some conversations about the increasing technology available to young people today, however the Christmas toys and decorations still enthralled the little folk! All the grandparents interacted with each other, whether it was sharing a sociable cuppa or chatting about their grandchildren together. Feedback on the day from a few people suggested that we should make the day an annual event.



**22 younger and 21 older people took part.**



## St Francis Primary School Lurgan

Our project involved 14 - 16 of our P.7 & P.6 pupils working with 15 - 20 residents in Manor Court during the month of December. We visited the residents on three occasions. On our first visit we made some Christmas log decorations together that the residents could keep for their rooms, we also made wooden tree decorations and paper chains. On our second visit we talked

about Christmas traditions and what Christmas was like when the residents were younger, what they did, what they got for Christmas etc, we sang Christmas Carols and played some games together. We then had a Christmas Tea Party with our friends in Manor Court for our third visit along with a Christmas quiz and nine of our friends from Manor Court also attended our school Carol Service in our local Church. This was a fantastic experience for all involved. The children enjoyed chatting to their friends in Manor Court and getting to know them. One of the children said 'the elderly are just like us, they like talking and I love to make them smile.' Another child said, 'it makes me feel good inside after I visit my friends in Manor Court, I look forward to going to visit them.' As a teacher it is lovely to observe the children working with the elderly as a different side of their personalities emerges, they become very confident talking to them and engaging with them whereas in school they are quite shy and reserved. We plan to visit the residents twice a month from January - June 2025.

**15 younger and 20 older people took part.**

## Walker Memorial Parent Support Group

Our senior pupils (p4-P7) put on a variety show in our assembly hall for the members of Castlecaulfield Open Door Club (for senior citizens) whilst they enjoyed some refreshments. This show included singing, Christmas bells performance, recorder music, accordion and drums, and highland dancing. The children then asked the ladies questions and found out some of them had went to or worked in our school and how the school has changed over the years. We also found they enjoy trips, gardening and sewing and that they would love to come and show us some of their talents and skills.



The variety show was followed by crafts where everyone made pompom hat Christmas cards and a Christmas bauble decoration which were all joined together to make a Christmas garland which will be displayed in school as a memento of our afternoon together. The children were happy to help the older ladies who found cutting difficult and the ladies helped the children who had got the wool tangled up. There were some lovely conversations between the children and older ladies about people and places they knew, where they were from and what they enjoyed doing (e.g. gardening, shopping, dancing, gymnastics, Lego).

Both the children and older ladies thoroughly enjoyed what was a truly heartwarming event and are very keen to get together again soon to share some of their talents and skills with each other.

**26 younger and 42 older people took part.**





## Edgewater Lodge Care Home

Country Kids Nursery 02/12/2024 & 03/12/2024 and Donaghadee Primary School junior choir came 18/12/2024 to sing a medley of Christmas songs for the residents and coloured and painted with them. For the children from the nursery it was their first experience in an intergenerational setting other than family. The residents and the children talked, sang and coloured in as if there was no age gap. There were some of the children from the primary school who have visited us when they were in Country Kids and it was great to see how they have developed their skills with the older generation. The residents helped to make up party bags for the children from the grant received from LGNI and the children were delighted with their gift.

**46 younger and 51 older people took part.**

## NI Hospice

We arranged for a group of A-level art students from St Malachy's college Belfast to come into NI Hospice to paint the windows in the patients' rooms for Christmas. Patients that consented, interacted with the students and we encouraged the patients and some of their family members to help paint the windows too. Stencils were provided if needed. Mid-morning we had a large table set up in the corridor and students, patients (who were able) and staff all sat down, had drinks and snacks. We used this time to interact with each other and also to paint the large window at the end of the corridor. The patients and their family members really enjoyed chatting to the students about art and some just enjoyed watching the skilful students brighten up the place. It also encouraged people to talk about Christmas and family. The patients that came out to the refreshments table particularly enjoyed chatting with each other. Each patient in NI Hospice has their own room and wouldn't always get a chance to interact with others.



Interacting with others has great benefits for patients. It can help take away from their own problems as they can see others are going through similar or even worse circumstances. The students enjoyed getting a day away from the classroom and also seeing the smile on patients faces when they added some Christmas cheer and colour into the lives of palliative patients. We hope to link up again with the students in spring and maybe paint some pots for spring bulbs.

**8 younger and 9 older people took part.**



## Vibe



We started with sensory play stations centred around the theme of Christmas, which allowed all ages to come together and have fun. One of our stations was a photo booth, which allowed a photo to be taken which was then printed and made into a Christmas bauble. Everyone loved the keepsake to remember the fun morning they had connecting with other ages and having fun. We of course finished off the party with a visit from Santa and some festive treats in our cafe.

Vibe had a number of volunteers helping throughout the morning, making sure everyone was happy, sensory stations were kept tidy and treats were restocked. All of the feedback was extremely positive therefore we hope to run a similar event again. A few of our grandparents thoroughly enjoyed coming along to toddler club and plan to come back to our bi weekly toddler club with their grandkids. A huge success in our eyes. Thank you for your support.

**38 younger and 43 older people took part.**

## Ardlough Care Home

As it was the festive season, we had a music and movement session with the young children from Mini Melo Beats that have been coming to us for about 5 months. We had a mixture of Christmas songs that both generations were familiar with and used various items that we could shake, and flip to get us all moving. Everyone benefitted from these sessions as it was uplifting, as my residents love to see the children, it got us moving our bodies and had a sensory element for those that have hearing and sight impairments. My residents interacted with the children promoting engagement. We find some residents that are low in mood or prefer not to engage will interact better with young children. We can see from having these sessions the confidence and self-esteem growing from both generations and how both age groups show empathy and kindness towards each other.

**10 younger and 15 older people took part.**





## Connect Fermanagh

Connect Fermanagh is a befriending telephone service, we are purely run by volunteers. Our volunteers make weekly phone calls to people (mostly elderly) across Fermanagh who are experiencing and living in isolation and loneliness. We organise social events to bring both our volunteers and service users together. This Christmas we invited Jones Memorial school to join us for Carol singing and festive fun. Both the young people and our members enjoyed the day immensely. Conversations and sharing stories! Our

service users are still talking about it with our volunteers during their weekly calls. Opportunities like this means the world to people and the connection with young people brings a different energy to the room.

**25 younger and 25 older people took part.**

## Portglenone Primary School

Our guests arrived for our whole school Carol Service and became the audience for the P1-3 children's performance of the Nativity story and then listened to the P4-7 children as they sang their Christmas pieces, read the Christmas story from the Bible and some of them played instruments. When the performances were over, the P1 and P6 children stayed in the hall with the guests and gathered around a couple of tables. At their table, the children painted a Christmas decoration for their guest to take home and put on their tree as a reminder of their visit.

The children and guests had some refreshments together and were encouraged to chat about Christmas and share stories. All the guests were very positive on the way out and said they had enjoyed the morning and were so impressed by the children's performance and ability to engage in discussion. Many of them said it was lovely to be back in school and it put them into a festive mood. The children were buzzing afterwards and full of stories about what had happened during the morning. The P1s talked about their 'new friends'. One of the local ministers had mentioned a week later than a couple of the people who had come with him was still talking about the event very positively and suggested it would be nice if we could run a similar event later on in the year. The children are looking forward to a visit to the Fold and we went down the week after our event. They sang familiar Christmas songs with the residents and sat in small groups and listened to some of the residents reading them the Christmas story books we had taken down with us. We will return for Easter and in the Summer to keep the contact going.

**37 younger and 13 older people took part**







## The County Care Home

Using the funding, The County Care Home successfully implemented a series of intergenerational Christmas activities in collaboration with Model Primary School, Enniskillen. Children from different year groups visited over several days to participate in wreath making, cookie decorating, carol singing, and a festive 'fun day'. For the purpose of the funding, we focused more on the Cookie Decorating. The residents were delighted to have the children around. They particularly enjoyed sharing stories about Christmas past and present with the children, who were exceptionally well-behaved and engaged enthusiastically. The residents reported

having 'good craic' with the children, demonstrating significant social and emotional benefits. These activities not only provided valuable social interaction for the residents but also helped create intergenerational understanding and respect between the children and the elderly. Building upon this successful collaboration, The County Care Home plans to continue organising regular intergenerational activities throughout the year.

**26 younger and 7 older people took part.**

## Rainey Endowed School Community Group

We ran a Christmas party for residents of Milesian Manor Lifestyle Care Home, Magherafelt, on Wednesday 11th December 2024. The party lasted for one hour and was held at the Care Home. 20 6th Form students from Rainey Endowed School Community Group organised the party and there were about 20 residents of the Home who were present. The students chose the following activities: pass the parcel, Christmas Bingo, a Santa craft activity and Carol singing. At the end of the party the Care Home provided tea/coffee and some party food. The students sourced the items for pass the parcel and wrapped the gifts. They assisted the residents with each activity, making the craft with the residents and playing the bingo along with them.



The students learnt empathy as they saw what the residents were capable of and how they required assistance. They were able to chat to the residents about what Christmas was like for them in the past as they interacted with them. The students provided the music for the carols and printed out large text word sheets so the residents could follow along. At the end of the party two students dressed up as Santa & an elf and gave out a small gift to each resident which included shortbread & gingerbread men made by two students. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and so did the residents.

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**20 younger and 20 older people took part.**



## Pond Park Care Home

Our care home residents came together with our local Preschool Jolly Rodgers Lisburn on Friday 6th December and Monday 9th December 2024 in two separate sittings, as the preschool have two classes. Both activities were based on a Christmas theme where everyone enjoyed decorating wooden tree ornaments using a variety of different texture materials. On both days everyone really enjoyed the activities, followed by gathering together for a snack and a Christmas story. We then surprised the residents

and children with a Santa visit, where they got their photo taken and Santa gave them all a gift. Both activities went really well and everyone enjoyed them. The crafts were well laid out for the residents and children to manage to get around and the residents and children enjoyed chatting together and laughing. I found after standing back and observing during the activities how much everyone was smiling and resident's faces were proud when the children were crafting. On these days there was lots of questions about the home and why the residents live here, so following on from this we have now arranged for the preschool children to come in and visit each of our 3 units and spend time with residents at the end of February. I found activities like these are so important as it really does help with the social interaction between the age groups. It really made our residents feel a sense of being wanted and needed, in that the children were depending on them on these days. These activities allow the children to see and feel what goes on within care homes and that the people living in them are no different to their granny and granda at home. It also gives the children a better chance to communicate with an older age group and vice versa.

**15 younger and 12 older people took part.**



## Friends of Moneynick Primary School

The children had three visits to Ard na Grainde Nursing Home where they played board games, made Christmas cards and sang carols. The residents were also invited to our Christmas Show and which over 12 attended with their nurses and health care assistants. This has been a worthwhile journey and a positive experience for all. There have been four events overall and we now plan to visit monthly to play games, quizzes etc. We are also going to invite the residents to our community events throughout the year.

**20 younger and 25 older people took part.**





## Ashwood Nursing Home

Our nursing home had a visit from a mobile interactive petting farm and children aged between 4-14 came to the event. The residents were very good at encouraging the children to touch the various animals and insects and not be afraid. It was a great sensory activity for both generations to learn about the animals and ask questions. The mobile zoo brought various critters such as an owl, snake, hedgehog, centipede and the residents asked the children what sound it makes, starting a conversation. After the critters left, the children stayed longer to chat about what

they had learned. There was a Christmas piñata for everyone to try to hit sweets from which was great fun to finish the event. The nursing home has visits from a local nursery school every couple of months. The children and residents have a craft class, the residents choose which crafts to make. Residents love to watch the children's excitement when they visit, it lifts their mood.

**7 younger and 12 older people took part.**

## Craigdun Care Home

On 6th December 20 members of Ballymena Primary School came along to the home with two teaching staff to sing and play for our residents. We then enjoyed hot chocolate together and both adults and children had a great time...talking about 'what Santa was bringing' and talking about their plans for Christmas both children and adults. We all sang Jingle Bells and the big man in red came in for a visit delivering gifts to the children.

We had 25 elderly residents present, families and friends and every staff member from all departments within the home came along to watch and listen. It had been a long time from many of our residents engaged with children!

This was a very successful event and many thanks once again to LGNI & Public Health Agency for making this happen.

**20 younger and 40 older people took part.**







## Carrowreagh Primary School

We completed a visit to Trinity friendship group at Trinity Church in Ballymoney. Our theme was storytelling and sharing of stories. We had arranged for the visit to happen just prior to Christmas and asked members of the group to prepare a little on their memories of Christmas as a child. Our pupils prepared a few Christmas songs for the group and we sang these to open the visit. The teacher then shared a Christmas story of the 'Christmas Cottage' with the group. Then some of the children shared their thoughts on what they are looking forward to most about Christmas,

with the group. We then invited any members of the group who might want to share thoughts about Christmas when they were a child, and a number of members came forward and delivered these to the children. We then had storyteller Liz Weir tell a Christmas story for the group and we closed the meeting with another Christmas song from the children. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and gained a lot from the event.

**26 younger and 42 older people took part.**

## Gortacharn Nursing and Residential Home

We welcomed pupils from local Primary Schools (The Moat, Lisnaskea, St. Ronan's Primary and The Bunscoil Irish School, Lisnaskea) to take part in our Christmas Connections and Intergenerational Sessions. The Moat Primary school visited for two sessions, where the residents and pupils made Christmas decorations, sock snowmen, played Christmas games and pass the parcel. St. Ronan's Primary and the Irish school came and played Christmas games and also sang festive songs to the residents.



This proved very successful and the pupils and residents greatly enjoyed the buzz, interacting and having great chats together. The children and the residents felt greatly at ease with one another and through these informal sessions, conversations sparked about how the residents spent their Christmas' as children and what they got as presents.

**68 younger and 25 older people took part.**

## Wood Lodge Care Home

We held a Christmas residents party and involved the local primary school. We supplied treats to the children and residents and arranged for a pony and Santa to visit, complete with a musician on site. The pony went round all of our residents and everyone really enjoyed the day.

**8 younger and 32 older people took part.**

## Lisadian House Private Nursing Home

Children came into the home from Girls Brigade, Busy Bees Nursery to sing Christmas songs with the residents and interact with them. Children from Friends school orchestra also attended to entertain the residents.

At Easter we are having Peter's Patch nursery coming in to decorate Easter bonnets with the residents and Meadow bridge school children are coming in to make Easter cards.

**20 younger and 20 older people took part.**

## Redford Residential Home

We had Cullybackey Boys Brigade, junior section, come to visit with approximately 20 boys attending Redford Residential Home for a night of crafts, worship and games.

There were 5 leaders of the BB also in attendance. It was a great night for both the young boys and our residents to interact and bond with games and crafts as well as sharing the word of God.

**20 younger and 24 older people took part.**





### **Corriewood Private Clinic**

The Christmas activity delivered by Corriewood Private Clinic included a craft session with the pupils from a nearby school and a holiday story sharing session, where children were encouraged to create drawings based on the stories told to them by the residents.

This event gave the care home the opportunity to reduce isolation during the festive period among their residents while fostering understanding between the generations.

**8 younger and 8 older people took part.**

### **The Carson Project**

The Carson project is a charity registered group, based in Harryville, Ballymena. Their women's group meet weekly to come together for activities and soup and are aptly called the "Souper Friends"!

Wanting to explore activities that involved children, the group reached out to a local school and held a Christmas event whereby both pupils and group members came together to complete crafts, sing carols and enjoy eating together. This successfully achieved their objectives to bring all ages together to interact, share knowledge and skills and most importantly, to have fun!

**20 younger and 35 older people took part.**

### **Glenview Care Home**

Unfortunately due to an outbreak of flu in the care home, their Christmas Connections event had to be cancelled. However, this setting has since made a link with a local primary school who had previously been in to sing Christmas carols to the residents, earlier in the month of December.

As to deepen this new relationship, the care home has now planned an activity with the school to celebrate Valentines Day and will use their small grant funding to deliver a craft session in addition to other activities.





# Summary

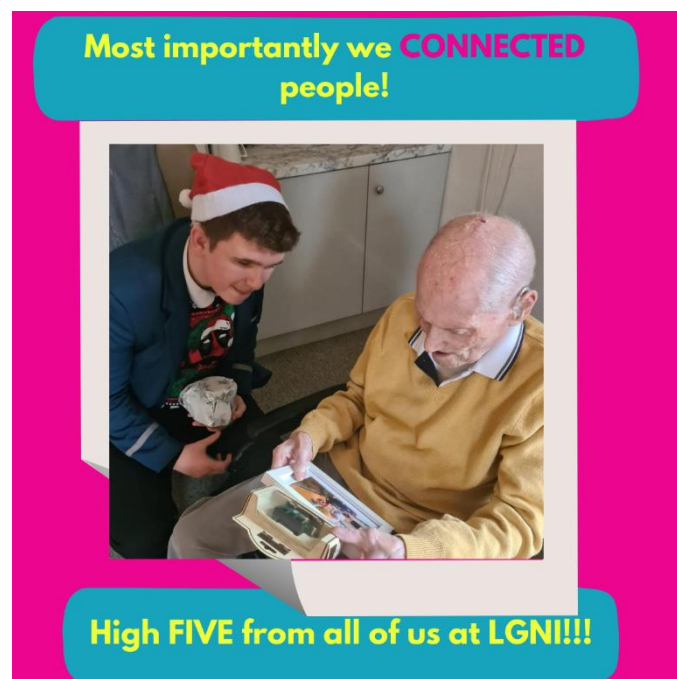
LGNI yet again have been completely overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the 30 groups/settings that took part in this year's Christmas Connections small grant scheme, funded by the Public Health Agency.

Every event or activity has been inspiring and testament to the individuals behind them who are striving to build intergenerational and Age-friendly communities.

This report further shows that new groups and organisations are continuing to adopt an intergenerational approach to their normal activities, with over half of grantee's stating that this was their first experience of delivering an Intergenerational activity or event.

We continue to see more groups and individuals coming together to share, recognise and value the contribution of all the generations who live here and feel these small grant opportunities deliver a significant increase to the use of Intergenerational practice within communities, year on year.

A big thank you to all of the people, organisations and settings across NI that made the activity in this report happen! We could not do the work we do without these Intergenerational Champions!



**Linking Generations Northern Ireland**