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TJ enjoys magic of the red carpet at 'LauraLynn Oscars'

By ISABELL COLLERAN

TRISTAN James Sheil (TJ) from Oylegate, Co. Wexford and his family's film 'The Mystery of the Missing Magic' won the best mystery movie award this year at the 'LauraLynn Oscars'.

The Sheil family were one of six families chosen to film movies that were shown at the Odeon Cinema Charlestown on September 9. TJ's Mother, Julie Sheil said that "the red carpet was rolled out and the kids were treated like royalty" at the black-tie event.

Each year, families involved with the LauraLynn foundation fill out a form and choose the events they would most like to take part in during the year.

Julie had no idea what the 'LauraLynn Oscars' entailed when she signed her family up for it but said "it turned out to be a once in a lifetime opportunity".

Each movie reflects the unique lives and personalities of the family that are starring in it and the common theme across all movies at the 'LauraLynn Oscars' is that the child who has the life-limiting condition plays the starring role.

Before filming began, TJ's parents Julie and Darren had a Zoom session with the LauraLynn professional script writers. During this session, they discussed all of TJ's favourite things to do and his interests. Encanto, TJ's favourite film was chosen as the basis of TJ's movie. TJ was the star of the show and his family and friends also played roles on-screen.

In TJ's movie, script-writers captured the magical lengths one man will go to to ensure that Liverpool win the premiership. This whirlwind adventure movie took a day to film and following this it was sent to professional editors. None of the families had seen the finished edit of their movie before they



TJ Sheil and his parents Darren and Julie Sheils at the 'LauraLyn Oscars' in Odeon Cinema Charlestown.

watched it on the big screen, which made the black-tie event even more special.

Julie said "it was a really special experience for everyone involved and TJ loved being star of the show and centre of attention. We'd have been lost without LauraLynn throughout the years".

This is the sixth year of the 'LauraLynn Oscars'. The 'LauraLynn Oscars' is a digital storytelling initiative pro-

viding LauraLynn children with life-limiting conditions and their families a platform to create their own unique movie while supported by industry professional writers. LauraLynn Senior Play Therapist Michelle Hartnett came up with the idea to conduct a film workshop for siblings after conducting research on sibling loss. The project quickly developed into a larger family-focused event. Michelle

coordinates the event alongside Lorna Collins, Joanna Butler and a team of industry professionals and volunteers.

"This project is important because it empowers families to not just watch the stories they have created unfold on screen but to celebrate their family. It is a day they all stand in the spotlight, as a family creating moments of beauty, joy and everlasting memories," said Michelle.