



THE JUNIOR LEAGUE AND THE LINKS, INC. TEAM TO SUPPORT SLANT 45

American Airlines Center also named venue for the program's year-end celebration

NORTH TEXAS (December 14, 2009) – The North Texas Super Bowl XLV Host Committee and Big Thought today announced a partnership between the five North Texas Chapters of the Junior League and five chapters of The Links, Inc. that will result in a vast volunteer force to support SLANT 45.

This marks the first time that these chapters of the Association of Junior Leagues International (Arlington, Dallas, Fort Worth, Plano and Richardson) have ever come together in support of a single project.

SLANT 45 (Service Learning Adventures in North Texas) is an historic initiative that will involve 20,000-plus elementary-aged students (grades 3-5) from across the region. These children will log at least 45,000 service-learning hours while tackling projects that better their communities. SLANT 45 was conceived and will be implemented by North Texas-based Big Thought (www.bigthought.org), one of the nation's leading nonprofit organizations focused on improving public education through creative learning. The program is funded by Bank of America and local philanthropists, Ted and Shannon Skokos.

The five North Texas Junior Leagues and The Links, Inc. volunteers will help with registration, project coordination and curation of reflective art pieces. They will also assist the Host Committee and Big Thought with spreading the word about the program. The SLANT 45 Action Team is chaired by former Dallas Cowboys fullback Daryl Johnston and its honorary co-chairs are President George W. Bush and Mrs. Laura Bush.

"It's going to require a tremendous amount of teamwork and commitment to execute SLANT 45," SLANT 45 Action Team Chair Daryl Johnston said. "These two outstanding organizations that represent more than 3,000 North Texas women will make the program meaningful and successful. Their role will be instrumental in providing these eager teams of kids the support they need and deserve"

The Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

The Links, Inc. is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of extraordinary women who are committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African-Americans and other persons of African ancestry. Members commit themselves to be "linked in friendship" and give service through the organization's four program facets: Services to Youth, National Trends and Services, International Trends and Services and The Arts. There are five chapters in North Texas including Dallas, Fort Worth, Mid-Cities, Plano-North Metroplex and Trinity.

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“The Links and Junior League are amazing organizations known for their service to the community,” said Gigi Antoni, Big Thought President & CEO. “It’s a privilege to have these two organizations modeling their commitment to give back to others. It is my hope that young people involved with SLANT 45 will grow up with a desire to continue to serve their community just as these women are doing.”

Service-learning is a method of teaching through which students apply their academic skills and knowledge to address real life needs in their own communities. Service-learning includes researching community needs, giving back to the community and reflecting on the experience by demonstrating knowledge gained through participation.

The Host Committee and Big Thought also announced that the American Airlines Center will host the SLANT 45 year-end celebration in January of 2011. This event will bring all those involved in SLANT 45 under one roof to celebrate the program.

For more information on SLANT 45 or the partnership, please visit www.slant45.org.

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About Big Thought

Founded in 1987, Dallas-based Big Thought is one of the nation’s leading nonprofit organizations focused on improving public education through creative learning. Driven by its mission — to make imagination a part of everyday learning — Big Thought develops groundbreaking programs to address problem-solving, life skills and workforce development, providing children with pathways to success. Through its strategic systems building and innovative partnerships, Big Thought now serves more than 300,000 Dallas children, families and teachers each year, both in and out of the classroom. Annually, Big Thought also delivers more than one million hours of programming and individual creative instruction. A model to cities across America, Big Thought has achieved national recognition, including the Americans for the Arts “2009 Arts in Education Award” and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities “Coming Up Taller Award” in 2004. Learn more at bigthought.org.