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As part of DFW Super Bowl effort, women, children to team up for service projects

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More than 3,000 women are set to join 20,000 children for a series of service projects that organizers say will enhance North Texas long after Super Bowl XLV has entered the record books.

Organizers of SLANT 45 — or Service Learning Adventures in North Texas — announced Monday that they will partner with chapters of the Association of Junior Leagues International and The Links Inc., both women's service organizations.

SLANT 45 will recruit third- through fifth-graders into community enrichment projects that will contribute more than 45,000 volunteer hours in Denton, Collin, Tarrant and Dallas counties. The initiative is billed as the largest project of its kind in National Football League history, and organizers say its goal is to use the Super Bowl spotlight to create a lasting legacy for North Texas.

Former Dallas Cowboys fullback Daryl Johnston, who is now an NFL announcer for Fox Sports, made the announcement at a news conference at American Airlines Center in Dallas.

"We have the other two critical components for this initiative to be as successful as we want it to be," said Johnston, chairman of the SLANT 45 planning committee, under the direction of the North Texas Super Bowl XLV Host Committee.

Using a football analogy, Johnston said the initiative already has a great offense in Big Thought Inc., a North Texas-based nonprofit that is creating the curriculum.

The two service organizations are like adding defense and special teams, he said.

Coming aboard are the Dallas, Fort Worth, Arlington, Richardson and Plano chapters of the Junior League, which aims to develop the potential of women, and five chapters of The Links, a service organization committed to enriching and sustaining the culture and economic survival of African-Americans and others with African ancestry.

The groups will work to promote, guide and support SLANT 45 projects in their geographic areas.

The host committee announced SLANT 45 in September at a Cowboys Stadium event featuring honorary co-chairs George W. and Laura Bush.

Big Thought, which seeks to improve public education through creative learning, has been developing "playbooks" to help children and adults conceptualize and carry out the projects.

A launch event complete with project details is planned for January.

"Our mission is to bring the opportunity of SLANT 45 to our communities," Doris Johnson, president of the Mid-Cities chapter of The Links, told the crowd Monday. "We look forward to reporting to you all of the exciting projects that will be going on."

Leigh Anne Haugh, president-elect of the Junior League of Dallas, said members are eager to get involved in SLANT 45.

It's a "perfect fit," she said.



In January 2011, the thousands of children and adults involved in SLANT 45 will gather at American Airlines Center for an end-of-project celebration complete with big-name musical groups and other celebrities, organizers said Monday.

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