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## Holiday benefit has been magical for city

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More than two decades have passed since a group of Junior League of Arlington members sat down and discussed ways to fund community projects.

Since its inception -- first as the Service League of Arlington in 1975 and then as the Junior League since 1982 -- the nonprofit organization has given nearly \$2.5 million and 1 million volunteer hours to more than 100 agencies in the community.

But it wasn't an easy start to find ways to raise those millions.

When Lana Wolff and five other women sat down and brainstormed ideas in the early 1980s, lots of concepts were put on the table. But it was Wolff who thought of a holiday gift market.

Holiday Magic was born.

It wasn't an easy birth, either.

In 1983, Arlington didn't have a facility large enough to accommodate the event and parking.

The group worked with city personnel to get approval, settle electrical and technical details, and erect two tents in the old Arlington Stadium parking lot. Things were going as planned until, three days before the event opened, the city sold the stadium and the parking lots to the Texas Rangers.

The committee then had to persuade then-Rangers owner Eddie Chiles to let them use the parking lot. Luckily, he agreed.

More than 3,500 people attended that first gift market and helped the League earn \$14,434.54.

Boy, how things have grown. This year, more than 10,000 are expected to attend Holiday Magic and help raise nearly \$100,000.

Angie Blackburn is serving as event chairwoman for the 25th anniversary celebration.

A League member for eight years, Blackburn said Holiday Magic is a great event for the League and the community.

"It's a great way to start the whole Christmas shopping experience, and while you're doing that, it's a great way to give back to the community," she said.

Holiday Magic is scheduled for Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at the Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way.

The event will include an anniversary party, two fashion shows, a luncheon, a children's party and a gift market. Call 817-277-5751 for more information.

This year, the League will contribute nearly \$43,000 and volunteer hours to support programs that help women and children. These programs include the AIDS Outreach Center, Boys & Girls Clubs of Arlington, Friends of the Arlington Public Library, The Rainbow Room, Make-A-Wish Foundation, All Star Equestrian and the Junior League of Arlington's Center for Community Service.

Online: [www.jlarlington.org](http://www.jlarlington.org)