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**MARKETPLACE**

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**HEADLINE: Famous people pair up with charities**

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BODY:

DAVID BRANCACCIO, anchor:

This is MARKETPLACE. I'm David Brancaccio.

*(Audio montage of "There's No Business Like Show Business")*

BRANCACCIO: That may just be the motto of the cause business as well. Take a look at tonight's charity calendar in Hollywood. An award for Quincy Jones at a Habitat for Humanity dinner; a benefit concert for the Children's Health Coalition starring Melissa Etheridge and Sheryl Crow. We asked MARKETPLACE entertainment desk contributor Martin Kaplan to explore the star connection to non-profits.

MARTIN KAPLAN reporting:

Please pay attention. That's not me talking, that's every movie-political candidate-soft drink-wonder drug-sports team-retailer-diet guru-and mutual fund on the planet talking. But what if you're a charity in a tension economy where everyone's after everyone else's eyeballs, how do you get anyone to notice you?

Ms. JULIE NATHANSON (Publicist): The way to get to the media is by having celebrities, which is not necessarily a good thing. It just is the way of the world at this particular point.

KAPLAN: That's publicist Julie Nathanson, a senior executive at Rogers & Cowan. If you're a non-profit, you've got to go for stars.

Ms. NATHANSON: I think it's unfortunate but as it does happen to be the case, I am gratified that so many of the celebrities that I know and that I've represented are willing to give their names, to give their time, because they do understand what they bring to the table is something that the cause is not going to get any other way.

KAPLAN: Not everyone agrees. Barry Greenberg, whose company Celebrity Connection is a for-profit matchmaker between stars and causes, thinks that star power means a lot less to a charity's bottom line than the nuts and bolts of good management.

Mr. BARRY GREENBERG (Celebrity Connection): Celebrities have never been documented to have a tremendous impact on the not-for-profit organizations. Celebrities themselves are not particularly believed in terms of their appeal. What they do is add icing to the cake, but the celebrities are going to, in some way, cost the organizations money.

KAPLAN: Hold on. Cost them money?

Mr. GREENBERG: People say, 'Well, I'm sure they wouldn't mind flying coach, because I know they care about the cause,' but that's not what you want. If you show up in that Dodge Dart with your dog sitting in the backseat, it takes away from what it is you're trying to accomplish.

KAPLAN: So the big limo makes them look the way you want them to look for your purposes.

Mr. GREENBERG: It can be a Town Car.

KAPLAN: What makes the celebrity a good get for a charity? Rule one, availability.

Mr. GREENBERG: Not the star of the television show, but the second or third lead on the show. Someone who's got a little more time to do what you need them to do and believe in what you believe in.

KAPLAN: Rule two, authenticity.

Mr. GREENBERG: You want them to be able to come to your convention, shoot your public service announcement, because they want to do it, not because you're begging them to do it.

KAPLAN: Publicist Julie Nathanson.

Ms. NATHANSON: A friend of mine, a big star on Broadway, actually, tells the story about a young actress stepping out of a limo, completely dressed to the nines at a giant charity event and being asked 'So what brings you here tonight?' And this very young, very inexperienced, very callow young actress saying, 'Well, you know, I have a new series and everybody's paying attention to me, and I decided it's time for a charity.'

KAPLAN: Someone who fits both criteria, authentic and available, is Esai Morales, who plays handsome Lieutenant Tony Rodriguez on the television series "N.Y.P.D. Blue."

Mr. ESAI MORALES ("N.Y.P.D. Blue"): Man, I have to tell you, I describe myself quite disparagingly as a cause slut. I allow myself to be used to draw attention. I think that as an actor there's too much focus paid on "what we're wearing and who we're doing," quote, unquote. It's just so superficial. It's so empty. It's so fluff entertainment. So I try to take some of that attention and refocus it where it belongs, which is, you know, issue-oriented things.

KAPLAN: One of the dozen causes that Esai Morales has thrown himself into is the Centers for Disease Control's anti-smoking campaign. Recently he directed a public service announcement for the CDC. It shows a young boy in a Brooklyn brownstone, rifling through his mother's purse.

Mr. MORALES: Then you see him come out and--Boom!--there she is, and he's busted. His hands go behind his back. She grabs his hands, pulls him forward and looks at his hands without us seeing what it is. And then we cut to the kid, says, 'I don't want you to die, Mom.' At this point, she takes the cigarettes, and hugs him, and throws them down on the ground and my voiceover comes over, it says, 'As a kid, I did everything I could to get my mother to quit smoking. And in the end, she did.' And then my real mother walks in the frame and I go 'Thanks, Mom.' And you know what? I get goose bumps, you know, because it's like thank you. And--and the tag line is 'quit for the ones you love.'

KAPLAN: I know the first charity to grab my attention by using a celebrity, and I don't think I'm alone in this, for two generations of Americans, Labor Day has meant the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon. Which leads us to rule number three. No good deed goes unpunished. Barry Greenberg.

Mr. GREENBERG: In the last 40 years, were it not for the Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, when would you have heard the name Jerry Lewis? I can't believe that there's somebody there who isn't saying, 'Oh, my God, can you imagine what we could do if we had Jerry Seinfeld?' Or 'What if this were the Tom Cruise telethon?'

KAPLAN: Hmm. MARKETPLACE is a non-profit. Maybe we could get Julia Roberts. No, not authentic enough. You need the MARKETPLACE-y business angle. Oh, I know. What about Alan Greenspan? No. Not available enough. Wait a minute, I wonder if SpongeBob SquarePants is taken? He was just on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*. This is Marty Kaplan for MARKETPLACE.

BRANCACCIO: Martin Kaplan is associate dean at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Communication.