

AUTISM

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Donovan McNabb (left) of the Philadelphia Eagles high-fives Mike Thalblum, the visiting clubhouse manager of the Oakland A's.



PHOTOS BY KATHY SHAYNA SHOCKET/SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC
Matt Kemp of the Dodgers, Torii Hunter of the Angels and Rickey Henderson, soon to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, take part in the charity bash.



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Infielder James Loney (left) and catcher Russell Martin of the Los Angeles Dodgers step up to the table to raise money for TACA, or Talk About Curing Autism.

Sports celebrities ante up to fund autism research

By Kathy Shayna Shocket
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

Race car driver Danica Patrick looked fashionably racy Saturday night at an intimate party hosted by Los Angeles Dodgers player Matt Kemp and Dave Stewart, the former Oakland A's pitcher known for staring down batters.

More than half of the 200 guests at the "Ante up for Autism" private bash at the Penske Racing Museum in northeast Phoenix were sports celebs. Patrick and husband Paul Hospenthal, residents of Scottsdale, were among those maneuvering their chips across the craps table to score big winnings for charity.

Others such as Dodgers Russell Martin and James Loney tried their hand at poker. Former D-Backs player Orlando Hudson, now a Dodger, was there with his wife Carryn and sister Alandria. Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb was one of the football personalities mingling with the group.

Talk About Curing Autism, a California-based organization, will benefit from the event. Kemp and Oakland A's visiting



Racer Danica Patrick talks with Beth Cocharn, a Paradise Bakery executive.

clubhouse manager Mike Thalblum's passion for helping TACA is personal. Kemp's 15-year-old brother Carlton and Thalblum's 6-year-old son, nicknamed Little Stewie, are autistic.

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