

# CONFERENCE EMPHASIZES *'Caring and Making a Difference'*

Each year, one of the favorite events at the Success Strategies for Businesswomen Conference is the Silent Auction. The donations for the 200 different baskets in this year's auction ranged from lotions, potions and bath oils to computers, Christopher Lowell furniture and the opportunity to have lunch with Office Depot executives. The biggest draw for lunch was Chuck Rubin, Chief Merchandising/Marketing Officer, who actually attracted two winning bids of \$6,100 each.

The donations, which came from vendors, speakers and panelists, ultimately raised \$75,000 for Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence, which makes loans to women entrepreneurs who normally wouldn't have a chance to find funding. The organization has provided some 600 loans ranging from \$500 to \$10,000. Office Depot has contributed more than \$225,000 to Count Me In since 2002.

The auction is coordinated by Mary Wong, Director of Community Relations. More than 50 volunteers, many of which were Office Depot employees, assisted with set up and coordination throughout the conference. "I am grateful for the support and outpouring of donations received from the



*The Silent Auction offered women a variety of items on which to bid, with proceeds going to Count Me In.*



*Chuck Rubin, Executive Vice President and Chief Merchandising/Marketing Officer for Office Depot (left), and then-Chairman and CEO Neil Austrian present a \$75,000 donation to Nell Merlino, Co-Founder and CEO of Count Me In.*

Merchandising Group, Store Planning, Sports Marketing, our vendors and so many others throughout the Company," Mary noted.

"We are grateful to Office



*Mary Wong, Director of Community Relations, presents James Mueller, Chief Executive Officer of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, with a \$25,000 donation from Office Depot and Xerox Corporation.*

Depot for their continued support," said Nell Merlino, Co-Founder and CEO of Count Me In. "Their generosity is overwhelming and will allow us to provide women who have been turned down or discouraged by commercial financial institutions with the funding they need to start their own businesses."

During the closing Inspirational Luncheon, Nell Grant, Global Account General Manager for Xerox Corporation,

and Mary Wong presented a check for \$25,000 to the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition. The donation will help fund a booklet aimed at creating awareness about ovarian cancer. It will be dedicated in the memory of Nell Grant's sister-in-law, Alana Long Croft, who recently passed away from ovarian cancer.

The booklet will be the third in a series. As they left the luncheon, the women in attendance received a 36-page booklet, *Ovarian Cancer: Quality of Life Issues*, which was made possible thanks to Office Depot's and AT&T's joint donation made to the Coalition at last year's conference.

"Office Depot seeks to enhance quality of life in the communities in which we operate and to serve humanity by supporting organizations that make a profound difference," Mary noted. "The National Ovarian Cancer Coalition is committed to doing just that, but most importantly to saving the lives of women."