

M ore than a family affair

Gifts come in all sizes and shapes, and anyone who's been around the Mary Kay world for a while knows the best gifts are intangible. They can make us feel and laugh and cry and hug one another with joyful thanksgiving, just for having them in our lives. They're called relationships, and they're priceless.



Independent Executive National Sales Director Carol Anton has been inviting women to the life she loves for 32 years. She knows what it's like to enrich and encourage, to mentor someone to the top of her dream. And when it's a relative, the outcome is all the sweeter: Sixteen members – so far – of Carol's family know the rich rewards of saying "Yes!" to the Mary Kay opportunity. It may be no surprise, then, that she and her sister-in-law, **Independent National Sales Director Thea Elvin**, are the first "sister-in-law" NSDs.

"I feel that I've given many women in my family a gift," says Carol. "We range in age from 18 to 81 and have one more common denominator, as all of our lives are being enriched in the same way. I'm grateful for the privilege of helping them create an abundant lifestyle and future for themselves and their families."

Relationships among the mothers and daughters, the aunts, nieces and sisters-in-law continue to strengthen as the women grow their Mary Kay businesses. Their conversations with one another often include tips and learning experiences and reflect their devotion to one another and the opportunity they've embraced.

"We've become best friends, confidantes and business partners, and we love traveling together to Seminar, local workshops and other functions," says Carol. "When my sister-in-law Nia and her husband, Mike, go out to dinner with me and my husband, Mike, the guys talk hunting and golf, and we girls talk 'Mary Kay'! When another sister-in-law, Thea, has a family cookout, the gals will be inside talking 'Mary Kay' while the guys are outside barbecuing. Our time in the business ranges from 27 to 32 years, and each of us now has a daughter with a Mary Kay business. We share the same skills, education, business philosophy and ethics, and the vision we learned from this great Company. My daughter, **Independent Senior Sales Director Tiffany Stout**, debuted April 2006 and earned the

use of her Cadillac Career Car. Her progress was a family affair, with all her aunts, plus her mom, coaching her. Nia's daughter Micah is a college student working toward Star Recruiter status."

Holiday guests at the Anton house find four pink Cadillacs parked in the driveway. "Every family event – birthdays, anniversaries, graduation parties, baptisms and weddings – has some 'Mary Kay' sprinkled in there somewhere!" laughs Carol. "Mary Kay is part of who we are, not something we leave 'at the office.' We live our

Mary Kay principles, philosophies and enthusiasm day by day in even small ways. Thea's computer screen saver is a shot of her granddaughter, Sofia, playing with the Mary Kay® color palette. At her daughter Jorgi's wedding, and at my daughter Tiffany's wedding, all three aunts and the mother of the bride were up early doing the bride's and the wedding party's makeup. Mary Kay 'stuff' was everywhere!"

Carol says there's never been pressure or judgment from any of the women toward any of the others to start a Mary Kay business. "It's happened naturally," she explains. "When you're having fun, you're advancing and making money, others get interested. My mother-in-law and 'second mom,' **Independent Sales Director Bessie Anton**, started her Mary Kay business more than 27 years ago to pay for her daughter's wedding. She had been a stay-at-home mom for 25 years raising five kids. Mary Kay is a respected name in our family, and there isn't one person who hasn't been positively affected by the changes this opportunity brings."

But there is more than financial gain fueling Carol's admiration. She says the Company has heart.

"Mary Kay herself sent me a handwritten note when my daughter Lexie had brain surgery 25 years ago," she recalls. "That gesture still touches my heart as one of the unique characteristics about this Company. They care! Many Independent National Sales Directors and corporate employees expressed their concern as well. Mary Kay's values match our own family values. That's why we have 16 family members with Mary Kay businesses!"

In the beginning, Carol had to prove to her "doubting family" that a Mary Kay business was the right choice for her. One by one they came to see



Top: From Left to Right: Ann Stout, Bessie Anton, Thea Elvin, Carol Anton, Nia Putnam, Maria Woodrow. **Bottom: From Left to Right:** Marissa Stout, Jann Rowbal, Jorgi Brunie, Tiffany Stout, Micah Putnam, Pia Anton

that she was serious, and eventually, her dad asked her to offer the opportunity to her sister.

Still, the road to success wasn't always a straight line. Carol has had her share of challenges. "I'm so glad I persevered, so that I could help even more women live their dream." She pauses and reflects on the years, lives and experiences that have become so deeply intertwined, close to home. "Offering the opportunity to a loved one can hold special paychecks of the heart," she says. "Every time we

get together, somehow it seems like Mary Kay herself is there with us."

Carol's Corner: Building a Mary Kay Business

"Sometimes people look at Independent National Sales Directors and think our paths have been all glitz and glam. But any of my 16 family members with a Mary Kay business can talk about personal perseverance. I, for one, have had all the obstacles anyone can experience – fear of rejection, finding bookings. Sometimes that telephone was so hard to pick up! At times I lost my focus, was inconsistent and disorganized, and even doubted that I could succeed, as have other women in my family.

"We overcame such things day by day, and over time developed new skills and a greater capacity for belief. When I started, I had just moved to a new area and had to approach strangers. I heard at my first success meeting that 'strangers are just friends you haven't met yet,' so I began to talk to people wherever I went. I became a master at conversational booking before I started booking from skin care classes!"

Looking back over the decades, what was the single most important step to becoming the leader she is today? "My willingness to do the uncomfortable until it became comfortable!" admits Carol.