

Leeza's Place event cares for caregivers

By Shannon McCarthy

Everybody can use a little pampering, but no one deserves it more than those who spend their days caring for others.

So on Nov. 18, Leeza's Place in Joliet hosted its third annual Pajamas & Pampering party.

"The purpose of it was to give back to the caregivers," said care advocate Kathy Miller.

In fact, that's the mission of Leeza's Place, 113 Republic Ave. in Joliet.

Sponsored by Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center, Leeza's Place is one of numerous centers across the nation founded by TV personality Leeza Gibbons.

It's a place for caregivers to find some respite from the demands of caring for a chronically ill loved one.

Leeza's offers resources for caregivers, support groups, memory therapy for patients suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia, education and events designed to de-stress caregivers.

Clad in cozy pajamas, volunteers at Leeza's were dedicated to doing just that.

Caregivers were invited to come in for a little pampering — like massages, spa treatments, haircuts, Reiki and arts and crafts projects.

They could also shop for holiday gifts like Yankee Candles, Premiere Designs jewelry, stocking stuffers, candy and more.

Plainfield resident Kim Jackson, a Leeza's Place volunteer, offered wire writing workshops that gave participants a chance to make their own personalized jewelry.

Bearing copies of her book, "Journaling, The Footprints of Your Life," Jackson was also there to talk about the weekly journaling class she teaches.

The class serves as memory therapy, but is open to anyone who wants to learn to preserve their life story.

Classes are offered Thursdays, with a 9:30 a.m. course for beginners and an advanced class at 10:30 a.m.

"This is a holiday thank you to the caregivers," said Jackson, adding that November was National Caregiver Month.

But the event wasn't just a chance for caregivers to get some TLC, Miller said.

"It's also a community event," she said.

Volunteers want to make area residents aware of the resources offered at Leeza's Place.

The center is open to everyone — not just caregivers, Miller said.

"You might not be caring for someone now, but one day, you may be," she said.

"The more we can get the word out (about Leeza's Place), the better it is."

For more information visit www.LeezasPlace.org or call (815) 741-0077.

Shannon McCarthy can be reached at (815) 436-2431, ext. 105 or smccarthy.enterprise@comcast.net.



Above, Darlene Burnham of Paul Mitchell gives a hand massage to Carol Webber of Joliet during the Pajamas & Pampering event at Leeza's Place. Caregivers were invited to indulge in massages, reflexology, spa treatments, haircuts and styling during the annual event.

At right, decked out in her pajamas, Plainfield resident Kim Jackson demonstrates wire writing during a caregiver appreciation event at Leeza's Place in Joliet.



PHOTOS BY SHANNON MCCARTHY