

handle those activities — while grieving for his wife, whose life was disappearing in front of his eyes.

Jean's illness also transformed her daughter's mission in life. After obtaining her mother's permission to talk about her disease, Gibbons established the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation for people with AD and memory disorders in 2002. For her tireless work in spreading awareness about AD, the American Academy of Neurology Foundation awarded her the Public Leadership in Neurology Award in April.

At press time, Jean Gibbons is still alive, but, says her daughter, she is beyond the point when there are any momentary rebounds of lucidity. "The 'little kisses from the angels' that she would give me are gone," Gibbons says. Earlier this year, she continues, "I went to say goodbye to her. I don't know if it was my need to do it or something more than that. But as I held her hand, she looked deeply into my eyes. I told her what her love and energy had done to transform our family, and to help other families, and I let her know that we are fine."

At 48, Gibbons is as vibrant today as she was when she first started her career. She's also raising three children — daughter Lexi, 15, and sons Troy, 13, and Nathan, 7. She hosts a nationally syndicated radio program, "Hollywood Confidential," and Lifetime television's primetime magazine, "What Should You Do?" a dramatic reality series about life-saving information in times of crisis.

The Best Antidote: A Healthy Lifestyle

With a grandmother who died of AD and a mother who is in the final stages of the disease, Gibbons knows that she may have inherited it as well.

A Leeza's Place for Every County

By Ed Susman

Leeza Gibbons wants a "Leeza's Place" in every county in the United States.

"Leeza's Place" is the name of the community centers that Gibbons has established for caregivers and those recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and other diseases that cause memory disorders (such as Parkinson's disease, brain traumas and stroke).

The centers aim to erase any stigma associated with these diseases; encourage screening to determine if memory problems are due to Alzheimer's disease or other conditions, such as vitamin or thyroid deficiencies; and teach patients and caregivers how to deal with the everyday challenges of living with a memory disorder.



◀ Gibbons greets Evelyn Glover, who has come to the opening of Health First Leeza's Place in Melbourne, Fla.

The centers are usually affiliated with a hospital, where tests can be conducted.

In addition, the Leeza's Place Web site offers useful services, such as

the opportunity to create a "Life Ledger," which is a secure Internet page where families can store important legal information, such as advance directives, so family members can stipulate their desire regarding medical care if a time comes when they can no longer express them.

Other activities include scrapbooking and Leeza's Memory Television, in which participants write scripts and create videos of their family history. "It can help us remember their stories," Gibbons said.

To learn more about the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation and the Leeza's Place centers, call **(888) OK-LEEZA (555-3392)** or click on **www.memoryfoundation.org** or **www.leezasplace.org**

There are Leeza's Places in Brooklyn, N.Y.; Melbourne, Fla., and Joliet, Ill. Centers in Los Angeles, Calif., Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton, Fla., will open next year.