

Dear WC,

I was wondering if you could please help some neighbors of mine. Under circumstances out of their control, the husband/father has lost his job, while staying home to care for his wife after an extensive illness. The mother has since returned to work, but the father is presently out of a job. They have two children and without his income, there is no way they can survive. For the past few years, they were just making ends meet, while both parents were working. I know this because they often had to cut back on everything else, such as an unexpected bill for car repair, etc. Please check in on them, when you can.

A Concerned Neighbor

Dear Readers,

I had no choice but to go to their house and knock on the door, since they did not have a telephone. I did not have a scheduled time to meet; I just paid a spontaneous visit. As I pulled up to where they lived, I could see there was double clear plastic on the windows. This always concerns me, because you know the individuals inside are having a hard time paying their utility bills. As most of us know, because of the unsubstantial windows in many older homes, the heat is literally 'going out the window.'

When I knocked on the door, I was politely greeted by the father/husband. I introduced myself, and I told him I had received a letter of concern, from a caring neighbor. His manners were more than polite, and he promptly invited me in. I glanced at the windows as I walked in, and I noticed two windows that were broken.

I deliberately went later in the day in order to meet the children. The children were very neat and well mannered. As I looked around, I could see a very tidy, but small, dwelling. This made me very proud of this family. It is one thing to be poor, but there is no excuse for not keeping things clean and orderly.

I was told that the mother was not at home and would not be home any time soon; she was taking advantage of some much needed overtime. The mother was actually taking on another shift, and working a 16-hour day.

The father had left his job of six years to get another job. The new job was paying \$2.25 more per hour. During the first two weeks of his new job, his wife came down with a bad flu, which left her completely helpless for 12 days. Unfortunately, both the children became ill as well. The father tried to explain to his new boss that he had to stay home to take care of his family. For the first few days, the boss understood. On the fourth day, the boss said he would have to let him go if he did not come to work the next day.

The father, having no choice but to take care of his family, pleaded with his boss. The boss said, "I am sorry, but the business has to go on." Sadly, there was no one at the new job who could fill in for the father. Two days later, he was hung up on. He tried calling again the next day, but the boss refused his call. The father was given a message from the boss, not to bother him again.

It is sad that our fellow human beings cannot lend an ear or be

understanding. It is sad that our state of trust has been broken by those who tell lies. When the truth is being told, it is not believed. I remember a time when something said, was something meant. I also remember when fellow Americans would stick together.

When this father/husband nursed his family back to health, his wife resumed work and the children went back to school. During this time, his family's love gave him strength. The father did not get sick, but his faith has been tested. He had not lied to his new boss, but he was despised for telling the truth. There was no sympathy, no understanding.

The father tried to go back to his old job, but they told him the position had already been filled. This man told me how sad he was, as he sat alone at home, trying to find another job. There was nothing available, other than part time. He said he often thought about how he had given up a \$6 an hour job to try and better things for himself and his family. He told me that when an unexpected expense happened in the past, for example, glasses for his children, doctor appointments, prescriptions, etc., they struggled, but somehow they always got by.

This man took a chance, like many of us do, to try and better his situation, and to try to achieve the American Dream. In this case, he ended up going backwards, financially. I asked him how he survived when they had unexpected financial hardships, like auto repairs, etc. He told me they would stretch their meals; he and his wife would eat less. They would share a meal. They would minimize their utility usage. They would do many other things to save pennies, including, wrapping the windows with double plastic that they had found in a dumpster.

I went to the new job, and it turns out I knew several of the people there. I vouched for this man. I obtained a letter of recommendation from his first job, stating he was a good employee. There are some employers who are unable financially to give raises, and there are some who are financially capable of giving raises, but do not. I ask, WWJD. What would Our Lord do? For any of these employers who would answer, keep the money for myself, they must think Our Lord likes watching people who have to put plastic on their windows or Our Lord likes to see hunger among parents so they are able to feed their children.

I think everyone of these employers knows exactly what Our Lord wants of them, but somehow they ignore their conscience and decide not to share the wealth. Suffering of mankind is because those who are in control, who have the power to make the difference, turn a blind eye to what is needed of them. It is because they do not care, they cannot be troubled by some else's suffering and they are ignoring Our Lord's wishes.

After I did my investigation, and I expressed the facts I had found, I told the new employer that the father/husband could not produce a written note from a doctor they could not afford to see. I asked "Can you please find it in your heart to give this family another opportunity?"

After pondering the situation, the employer found it in his heart to give this

man another chance. I told the employer he should be proud, because now he understands he is in a position to do something positive, that will make a difference in this family's life.

I explained the pain and suffering of this family to the employer. I could tell, through the sincerity in his voice that it struck home with the employer. The employer thanked me for showing him how he can make a difference, and I in turn thanked him again for giving this husband/father another chance.

When I informed the husband/father that he was getting his job back, he gave me a bear hug that knocked the wind out of me. The man turned to his wife, and they both hugged one another. The mother and father could not hold back their tears, as they felt the relief of the much needed income.

In addition to helping this man get his job back, we also helped pay for some of the utilities, helped get them caught up on their rent, and got them a phone. The mother told me they would only use the phone when absolutely necessary. They said they would not overburden their new budget we had set. They are a good family determined to stay on their feet.

It has been several months now, and I recently received a phone call from the new employer. He informed me, the husband/father's job performance has been outstanding. He thanked me for opening his caring and sharing heart to the needs of this family and others. The employer also told me how good he feels about himself and his new outlook on his fellow man.

I asked him, "Do you always use the words Caring and Sharing?" He told me, "Ever since I started reading your column. I now have a better understanding of caring for others and sharing the abundance I have been blessed with, with others in need."

This very grateful family sends a big thank you to everyone, as it is our networking that made this possible. As good people stick together, our hearts grow. The more we come together the more we can accomplish in our communities. I want to thank everyone for Caring, Sharing, and understanding. Please continue to network our letters.

***Health and Happiness, God Bless Everyone, WC***

**A Special Thank You To:** Bernard & Jean Labovitch, Lakes Area Women's Society, Lakeland Builder's Association/Builder's Helpers, St. Francis De Sales, Mr. Newman, Mr. Rayner, Mr. Mehring, Jeff Rhyan, Mark & Natalie Reno, Dan & Maria Kucera, Dale & Sue Healey, and ALL of you who support *The Time Is Now to Help* donation boxes, including the businesses that allow our donation boxes in their places of business. Anyone who would like a *Time Is Now to Help* donation box in your business, please call 262-249-7000.

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