

Food is a Blessing

Dear W.C.

12/1/08

My mother has been telling me for years how expensive food is. She has taught my sister and I how to stretch every penny of food cost. My sister and I are on the food program at school, but that doesn't cover dinner, weekends, and school breaks.

We came up with some inventive meal combinations to stretch our food. I would tell my friends at school about our unusual meals and they would look at me like I was strange. As I got older I found out that our made-up dinners were not something to talk about.

You see we don't have much money for food and if you think about what you have to spend for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, that's a lot of money that we don't have. Sometimes we add extra water to our soups to make them go farther. We also try to eat very slowly to make the meal last longer. My Mom taught us you feel a little bit fuller because you eat slower.

I was wondering if you could surprise my mother with a Thanksgiving dinner. Every time I see a picture of a full Thanksgiving table or hear my friends talk about all the food they had over the four day weekend. I question my Mom's explanation that Thanksgiving and Christmas is just another day for people to sell more food. I think she is just trying to make an excuse for why we do not have a lot of food.

Thank You and God Bless You,

A Daughter wanting to surprise her family

Dear Readers:

When I contacted the mother she was very curious how I got her name for a request for help. Since my visit was in person I could tell the mother was very proud and was becoming defensive. The daughter quickly stepped in to tell her mother she was the one that wrote the letter. I assured the mother by telling her how grateful and thankful I was that I was allowed to be there. She stopped glaring at her daughter. I told the mother, "Really I am very thankful that I can be here. You see when I was young boy I learned how to make a box of cereal last two weeks and how to mix rice and noodles and maybe if we were lucky we had butter. I know how it feels to go hungry." After a few more descriptions of my childhood meals the mother seemed to know I understood their situation, and the fact that there was no money for food.

I asked the mother about going to the food pantries. She replied that she had gone once three years ago and vowed she would never go again. She said she was so ashamed that she cried for weeks when her children weren't present. She told me about the food pantry she went to and how the man there had said some

cruel comments to her. I told her that the people at the food pantries had changed, they are very gracious and kind and that man no longer volunteers at the food pantry.

When I inquired how everything else was her answer was, "Fine." That answer is a red flag to me. Someone with not enough food definitely has other needs. Further investigating and questioning revealed her car was broken down and she was walking to work. When I asked about carpooling, her pride had kept her from telling anyone at work her car had broke down and she could not afford to fix it. Sometimes pride keeps you going and sometimes there are a lot of hardships that go along with pride, especially when there are fellow Americans out there willing and wanting to help.

I explained how there are many wonderful, kind people wanting, needing to do good through The Time Is Now to Help. I told her how we have come together to support the network of The Time is Now to Help along with many other good organizations.

We helped her get her aging car repaired, it is running well at the moment. We supplied winter coats. I did not drop off a meal for Thanksgiving. I knew the mothers pride would get in the way of her enjoying that meal. Instead I supplied her with some gift certificates so they could do their own shopping, enjoy picking out their own food, and planning their holiday meal. Now not only could they make several meals from their shopping together but they were able to pick out a special meal for Thanksgiving. Thanks to our awareness and our Caring and Sharing they will have gift certificates to pick out a special meal for Christmas. Very thankfully, the mother called crying and trying to talk. The mother now understands there are many good people wanting to help thanks to our Caring and Sharing.

With helping to get her car fixed, and the many hours she saved walking to and from work, this industrious woman was able to pick up a part time job. This has established an improved budget allowing them to purchase more food. I visited a food pantry with them. When we left I asked, "How was that? Were those people friendly enough?" She looked at me with tears in her eyes saying, "Yes, they were very friendly. If I would have known, I would have been going there this past year." As she told me, "It's for the betterment of my children. They don't need to be going hungry to maintain my pride." My response was, "That's exactly the statement I wish my mom would have been able to say when I was an underweight, malnourished child." We understood each other.

I want to thank everyone for Caring and Sharing and making this not only a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas for this family, but for also allowing us to step into their lives, make some adjustments, help them with their utilities and show them the importance of community and caring for one another.

Together we supplied much needed food to many this past Thanksgiving. The pains of poverty this year have tripled for many. I need to spend every minute I can to help ease that pain. I apologize if I have not returned some phone calls. Your understanding and prayers mean a lot to me and those we help.

Health and Happiness, God Bless Everyone, WC

Summertime Foundation \$10,000 Matching Grant: We have been graciously blessed with another matching funds grant beginning immediately. The Summertime Foundation will match, dollar for dollar, every contribution up to \$10,000. Thank you to the Summertime Foundation for this wonderful opportunity. We all know really hard times have hit our fellow American's. Together our Caring & Sharing will help ease the pain of living in poverty for many.

Please Help: Make checks payable to: The Time Is Now to Help, P.O. Box 70, Pell Lake, WI 53157. The Time Is Now to Help is a federally recognized 501(c)3 charitable organization licensed in the states of Wisconsin and Illinois. You will receive a tax deductible, itemized thank you receipt showing exactly what every penny of your donation provided for the poverty stricken.

A Special Thank You to: J.D. Development, Kunes Country Ford & Kunes Country Chevrolet & Cadillac, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Paper Dolls, Diane Flitcroft, Brian & Joan Goedland, Landon & Mary Petrie, Judy Dishneau, Peter & Gail Nieuwenhuis, Charles Koerner, Lynn & Jan Jeka, Robert & Mary Lou Schroeder, ALL of you who support The Time Is Now to Help donation boxes, and the businesses that allow our donation boxes. Anyone who would like a Time Is Now donation box in your business, please call (262)249-7000.

McDonald's Fundraiser: Please join us Saturday, December 20th, 2008. For the sixth year Bill McEssy is donating 100% of his gross sales from his 6 local McDonald's to The Time Is Now to Help. Please eat at one of Bill's following McDonald's locations: Lake Geneva, Lake Geneva Wal-Mart, Elkhorn, Delavan, East Troy, and Burlington. Every penny you spend will go to help our local poverty stricken of our communities.

Needed Cars: Once again we have a need for used cars. If anyone has a car they are thinking of trading in or an extra car you are not using, please think of those who are in desperate need of transportation to get them to and from work so they can provide the daily necessities for their families. Without reliable transportation it makes their situation even more desperate. Please Care & Share.

Goodsearch for The Time Is Now: Search the web with www.goodsearch.com and help to raise funds for The Time Is Now to Help. Just make www.goodsearch.com your homepage, pick The Time Is Now as your charity and the rest is simple. You can even shop some of your favorite online retailers. It is a fun and easy way to help the poverty stricken.

Endowments/Helping Others through Your Will: For those of you who wish to leave an endowment for the poverty stricken, we would greatly accept any gifts. Please think of those in desperate need, good people, living in fear of poverty and consider helping them through your will.

Donate Stocks/ Mutual Funds, Let the Government Contribute: Consider donating shares of appreciated stocks and mutual funds to The Time Is Now to Help and receive twice the benefits from your gift. Please call 262-249-7000 if you would like more information.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org