

Dear W.C.,

You are my last resort. I am a single mother with four children. I work full-time but at a low paying job. Because I work I am not eligible for assistance. How do they expect me to house, feed, cloth, and pay for utilities and medical expenses for four children at the hourly rate I receive. My ex-husband is in jail. I do not receive any child support from him. At one time my ex-husband was a good and kind man. When he began to drink he turned into another person. By the time he was headed to jail we were already in the process of getting a divorce. I did not want my children growing up in that kind of environment. It feels like my children and I are being punished for his crimes. Can you please help my children and me?

Hard Working Mother

Dear Readers,

Many single mothers receive harsh criticism for things that are out of their control. This single mother never had four children with the intention of raising them all on her own. She had been in a loving stable marriage with the intention of sharing the responsibility and reward of raising four children with her partner. When alcoholism took away the loving stable marriage she had she did the best she could to shield her children from its effects.

When I called this mother she was overjoyed I had called. I told her I would like to pay a home visit and asked if the children were at home. She said they all were there and told me to stop by anytime. Knowing her situation was most likely urgent I told her I would be right over.

When I arrived at their apartment I heard lively children's voices from inside. I heard the mother talking to the children through the closed door. I did not hear any shouting or arguing. When I knocked on the door I heard shouts of, "He's here. W.C. is here." With that the door opened and they were all standing there looking at me with such a hopeful look on their faces. I could see both the fear and the excitement clearly in their eyes. I introduced myself to all of them and was impressed with their good manners. Even the youngest child shook my hand and looked me directly in the eyes. All the children were clean but their clothing was very worn. I glanced at their shoes and sandals. They too were old, worn, and much too small. Their feet were hanging over the sandals, touching the floor. It was a very sad sight.

After some conversation and a tour of the small apartment the mother told the children we needed to talk. You could tell the children were very excited by our visit, but the mother

insisted. They all went in the kitchen to play a game. As the mother and I talked about the children, she began to cry. She was so sad for them, knowing how they appeared so bedraggled. She loved them so much but never had enough money. She was constantly fighting homelessness and had already experienced the utilities being disconnected several times. We then spoke about the serious subject of alcoholism, abuse, and prison, as the children were playing a lively game together in the next room.

The mother filled me in on the rest of the story that was not revealed in her letter. Six months after the husband had left the family he had been involved in an armed robbery that led to his incarceration. She said the man that he had turned into was nothing like the man she had married when she was younger. She still cannot believe he would ever be capable of such a thing. Even after all the abuse and drunken rages she had sustained while married to him. Once their divorce was final he had fallen in with a bad group of men from the local bar. He never visited the children or paid his child support. The mother had been struggling to support the children on her own for several years already. She did not share with the children many details of what their father had done. She told them he had done something wrong and had to pay for his crime. He had not been a good father to the children for quite some time so they rarely asked about him.

The mother cried when she admitted that she had the older children stay home from school to care for the younger children when they were sick. She could not afford to miss any work to stay home and care for them herself. She said she would have lost her job if she missed work. Becoming homeless with four children was her worst fear. Her old car had been giving her a lot of trouble the last year and she had ridden her bicycle to work many times. Her employer did not have any idea how hard she was struggling and what a great effort she made to be at work each day on time. I asked, "When was the last time you had received a raise or bonus?" And her reply was, "Never." I called her employer the following day.

After a very nice conversation with her employer, who admitted his business was doing well, I was assured she would be receiving a 40% raise. The employer assured me she was an outstanding employee. They promised if she stayed with them, more raises and bonuses would be available. The mother was very grateful for the raise and was hopeful it would help their financial situation. I went over the family's budget and made some suggestions. We helped with rent, utility assistance, car repairs, and clothing and shoes for the children. We also provided some much needed food and household necessities.

At my follow up visit I was greeted by four very happy, thankful children. They showed me their new shoes and the oldest child said, "Look W.C. My toes don't hang over the front of my shoes anymore." She said it in such a joking way. I laughed along with the children on

the outside, yet was so sad on the inside. No child should have to walk around with their toes and heels hanging over their shoes. They also were excited to show me their full refrigerator and cabinets a Time Is Now to Help volunteer filled. They were so polite and thanked me over and over for the food, shoes, and clothing. I told them about the many wonderful people that made this all possible. They then said, "We have been thanking God every night for The Time Is Now to Help and you W.C." I told them to include all of you in their nightly prayers as well. The children all confirmed they would pray for all the good people that changed their struggling life into, as the children put it, a happy life. God bless all of you for making this possible.

We are nearly at the conclusion of the August Blessings \$25,000 Matching Grant. Thank you for your generosity in making this matching grant a huge success. Every dollar you donate will be matched by another. Thank you for your caring and sharing for our many fellow American's in desperate need.

Health and Happiness, God Bless Everyone, WC/Sal

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 Very Special Thank You: August Blessings Donors, Clarence & Marilyn Schawk, Albert & Geraldine Hinton, Martin Business Group, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Aptar Group Charitable Foundation, Sandra & John Dietschweiler, Martin O'Brien, Ellen Kehoe, James & Mary Loftus, Helen-Kay Eberley, Bernard & Debra Stritzke, Fairfield Grange No. 679, John & Kathryn Swanson, Robert Dooley, Arlene Clausen, Margarie Egger, Frank & Kathy Taras, Michael Glass, Sherry Hale, Lora Hill, Chris Wood, Ana Kosok, Steven Cambridge, Amy Geise, Sue Radmiller, Mitchell Cline, Doyle Johnson, Angelica Oung, Venu Middela, Marc-Oliver Wright, Mary Hill, Wendy Hisel, Christine Busler, Amber Bergeron, Laronda Brown, Kathleen Ruppert, Trisha Donnelly, Bryan Stuba, W.C. Family Resource Center/Food Pantry volunteers, and all the God loving volunteers of all our caring food pantries, 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.

Memorials: The following donations were given in memory of Donna Harma: Robert & Lucas Lee & Kevin Kaari.

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