

Dear W.C.,

My children and I have been struggling recently. My husband passed away two years ago from cancer so I am now a single mother raising our two wonderful children on my own. My daughter is eleven and my son is seven. He has some challenges and attends Lakeland School. I work full-time but my income is just enough to cover our mortgage, utilities and food. It also is just enough to disallow me any further assistance. I had to pay for a recent car repair that was much more than our budget allowed but I need my car for work. Our house payment is now late and I could not pay our utility bills. My daughter is in need of seeing a dentist as she has pain in her mouth and I just learned she needs glasses. I know there are probably many people asking you for help right now. I feel so bad even asking for your help but I cannot stand to see my daughter in pain or unable to see in school. I also cannot risk losing our home or having my utilities disconnected. Both my children count on me to take care of them and I have no one else to turn to.

Dear Readers,

I went to the address listed on the letter two times and found no one home so I called to see when my visit would be convenient. The mother apologized for not being home as she works full-time and also drives her son to and from school, therapy and she also volunteers for school functions with her daughter. As she was on her way home when I called we arranged for me to meet them there.

When I arrived I found the mother in the driveway of the single story home, lifting her son into a wheelchair with the older sister's help. I watched as the young handicapped boy looked at his sister with a huge smile on his face and reached his arms out to hug her. She too smiled and gave him a big hug. As I got out of my car both children looked up in alarm as I walked over to introduce myself. The mother looked up as she was fastening her son into his wheelchair. I showed my identification and the mother explained to the children I was a friend there to help. The daughter put out her hand politely to shake and as we did this I saw the young boy put out his hand too, copying his sister. I shook both their hands and introduced myself.

The daughter led the way up a ramp with her younger brother in the wheelchair. The home was very modest but I could see had some modifications made to it to accommodate the son's special needs. When I commented on these additions the mother said, "These were all made by my husband before he got too sick. He was so worried about us and how I would handle our son after he was gone. He put in this ramp and made some changes to the house that he will need as he grows up. I promised him I would keep the children in this house and we would be fine." She quickly wiped away some tears and glanced at the children to see if they had seen them before continuing, "And here I am asking for help just two years later."

I told the mother, "At least you are asking for help before you are homeless or living without utilities. So many of the people we help come to us too late to save their home. I can see your priority is keeping your children safe and well cared for." The mother looked at me and said, "It is what I get up for every day. After my husband died I thought I would die too. I was

ready to give up. I looked at both our children and thought it was too much. How could I possibly do this on my own? But they showed me I could. They are the reason I get up every morning and go to work. They are the reason I come home every night because I can't wait to spend that time with them. That is why I had to ask for help from The Time Is Now to Help. I had to put aside my pride and tell you I could not do this alone. I understand why some people may wait as they keep thinking there is a way out of this. But I realized there was no way I could ever get caught up after that expensive car repair."

We went inside and the mother showed me around the house, pointing out the widened doorways and bathroom modifications. We sat to talk at the kitchen table while the daughter played with her brother. I watched as the older sister not only entertained her brother but engaged him in activities he could participate in. I could see the special bond they shared. The mother noticed me watching them and she smiled. She said, "It has been this way since he was born. She was four when he was born with several birth defects. She never seemed to notice and to her he was always just her brother, not her brother with challenges. They are both pretty special aren't they?" I couldn't agree more with the mother.

While the children played we went over the mother's budget and bills. The mother showed me the very expensive car repair that had taken nearly her whole month's income. I asked about the mother's job and employment. I knew where she worked but when I saw what she was earning I felt she would need a raise to enable them to get by going forward. I asked if she minded if I called her employer and she said she did not. I told her I would call later in the day after our meeting. I could see the mother was organized and had all her bills in order. She showed me her bank statements and I could see how she was just getting by each month. Any unexpected expense, such as the glasses the daughter needed, a dentist visit or an expensive car repair, was not allowed in her budget. I also noticed how frugally they were living. They did not have internet or cable television. The mother had a cell phone with a minimal plan just for emergencies for her son.

After evaluating this mother's finances and lifestyle I could see they were more than worthy and in desperate need of our assistance. I could see there was nowhere else this family should live other than the house so lovingly prepared by the now deceased husband. The mortgage payment was reasonable. The house was in good shape. Obviously the mother and children loved it as I watched the young son move around freely. I knew there would be limitations on his accessibility in any other housing situation we found for them. Our solution would be to bring her mortgage up to date and pay a month into the future. This would allow her to save some money for the future in case she encountered another unexpected expense. We also paid their utilities up to date and some for the future. I also contacted one of the dentists we work with to arrange for them all to get a check-up and the daughter would need to have her painful tooth fixed. We also provided an eye exam and glasses for the wonderful daughter. I saw for myself how she had been squinting and even complained to her mother that she had a headache. The mother told me how most days when she came home from school or watched television she would have headaches. I knew we needed to help this young fellow creation have good vision in order to live life to the fullest.

When I was done with my evaluation and preparing to leave both children came over to say goodbye. The young boy smiled at me and the sister said, "He is telling you thank you." I looked at the young boy and smiled back. The sister looked at the brother and said, "He is telling you you're welcome." I laughed and asked the girl, "How did you know that was what I was thinking?" She laughed back and said, "Because my brother taught me how to tell what people were saying with their eyes." The mother said, "They do seem to have a special way of communicating." I said goodbye to them with the assurance I would be back to reevaluate in a few weeks."

When I got back to my office I called the woman's employer and he was very receptive to my questions and concerns. He felt ashamed for not offering a decent raise long ago when her husband had died. Her employer told me how she has been an excellent employee for over nine years. When I told him what she would need to get by going forward he was willing to make that pay increase in order to keep her as an employee. I called the mother to give her the good news but the employer even beat me to it and had called her himself.

When I paid my next visit I found a much happier mother. The children were always happy as she had done such a good job sheltering them from any further stress in their young lives. When the mother saw me at the door she immediately had tears in her eyes, but this time they were tears of joy, of relief, of saved promises. The mother said, "Oh my. Where do I begin? Your assistance has saved my promise to my husband. I can keep my children here and we will get by without him. You have made that possible. How can I ever thank you enough?" I told her she did not to thank me, I told her about all of "You" and your Caring and Sharing that allowed me to be there to provide this assistance. The mother said, "Well you make sure you tell all of them how much this assistance meant to me and the children and even my husband. He can now rest in peace knowing we will be fine."

And here I am sharing that thank you with all of you. "You" have made the lives of a widow with a son with very special needs and a daughter with a big loving heart know they are not alone in this world. There are good people who care. And those good people are "You".

Please let us continue to help our fellow creations. Every dollar you donate will be matched by the Fox Charities Miracles \$25,000 Matching Grant. Together we will continue to remove the pain and suffering of our fellow Americans.

The Time is Now to Help has been chosen by the Lake Geneva Restaurant Week selection committee to participate in the 2016 Charity Check program - where the most voted non-profit will be the recipient of \$5,000 sponsored by Lake Geneva Country Meats. The 2016 Lake Geneva Restaurant Week event will take place June 3rd – June 12th, 2016. To learn more about this event please visit www.LakeGenevaRestaurantWeek.com. Be sure to start planning to attend this year's event and vote for The Time Is Now to Help to be the charity that receives the \$5,000 Charity Check.

Health & Happiness, God Bless Everyone, W.C./Sal

Please Help: There are many coming to us in desperation. Our good fellow creations need our compassion. Together we make a big difference. Make checks payable to: The Time Is Now to Help, P.O. Box 1, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. 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 how your donation provided assistance for the poverty stricken.

A Very Special Thank You: Fox Charities, Paul Ziegler, Family Foundation, The Rhoades Foundation, Martin Business, Badger High School FFA Coin Drive, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Rhonda Lee Desautels, Mike & Kim Olsen, Victor Stasica, William Davit, Kevin Kramer, Marlee Carlson, Alex Dahlstrom, Karin Collamore, Leo & Mary Ann Kmiec, Jeanette Logterman, William & Jean Isaacson, George & Leah Rozhon, Richard Geaslen, Sid & Patty Johnson, Gerald & Joyce Byers, Dorothy Tookey, John & Kathy Poiron, Josephine Carpentero, our anonymous donors and 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: Robert & Mary Ann Zelenski in memory of Catherine Zwieble.

Prayer Chain: Please pray for healing for the following people: Caroline, Susan, Clarence, Ryan, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynesha, Brandi's Grandma, Corinne and Marilyn.

W.C. Food Pantry: The W.C. Food Pantry is located at: 205 E. Commerce St., Elkhorn, WI. 53121. This is in the old Aurora Clinic building off of Hwy. 67 just east of Interstate 43. Their phone number is (262) 723-4488.

Inspiration Ministries Resale Shop: Please donate your gently used household items and furniture to the Inspiration Ministries Resale Shop. For local pick up of major items or collection appointments please call (262) 275-2264. Inspiration Ministries Resale Shop is located at N2270 State Rd. 67, Walworth, WI 53184. The Resale Shop is open Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please visit often knowing your support will provide life changing assistance for the fellow creations in their care. For more information visit www.inspirationministries.org.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org