

Dear W.C.,

I am a 60 year old widow that has had some hard luck recently. My wife died six months ago due to cancer. She was only 58. She was very sick for nine months before she passed. I had to quit my job to care for her every day. We barely got by on my unemployment and our small retirement savings until she died. Once she was gone the bills came rolling in, including I used the remaining funds in our savings to pay for a funeral. We never had much in our life but we loved each other. We were happy with what we had and never lived beyond our means. I still live in the house we bought thirty years ago. I am behind in the utilities. I have been trying to find another job but it seems no one wants to hire a man my age. I am still capable of hard work and long hours. I go to the library or the coffee shop every day to use their internet to look for jobs. I am ashamed to ask for help at my age but I don't know where else to turn.

Dear Readers,

This letter requesting our assistance highlights a common problem for both men and women of not quite retirement age. When a job is lost at this crucial time it is almost impossible to be hired again. Employers just do not want to hire someone that may retire in a year or two. I also had a suspicion that this man was not telling me all the areas he was in need of assistance due to his admission of feeling ashamed. I would have to pay a visit to be sure we gave the proper assistance.

I paid a surprise visit to the address on the letter. After knocking on the door of a small older home it was opened by who I assumed was our letter writer. After introducing myself and asking a few questions I was able to confirm he was the widowed man. The man politely invited me inside his home. The house was neat but everything looked to be original from 1950. There was a noticeable leak in the ceiling with a bucket underneath and the refrigerator door was ajar without a light on, indicating it was not in service. I told the man we needed to talk.

After speaking to the man about the obvious household repairs that were needed I asked him what other problems he was having that he did not mention in his letter. The man said, "I would like to just get some help with my utilities and I will figure something else out for the remaining bills." I looked at him and replied, "If we just pay your overdue utilities you will never get out of this financial rut you are in. You will continue to fall further and further behind every month. We must figure out how to help you in order to prevent this from happening again." The man looked down at his hands folded on the table, trying to hide his tears as he said, "I'm not sure I can go on without my wife. We were high school sweethearts and best friends. I've been trying so hard to get a job and move on like nothing happened but it's just so hard." I could tell the man needed someone to talk to in addition to his financial counseling so we spent over an hour talking about their life together and all the events that led up to her untimely death. The man was crying throughout his telling of the last painful months and how all he could do was try and comfort his wife as she wasted away. The husband told me how his wife had repeatedly told him during those last month's how important it was to her that he was there to comfort her and love her.

As the man continued to cry I asked if he had any family or friends. I could see the depression he was in. The man shook his head no. He explained, "We had a son that died when he was six years old. He drowned while swimming at one of his friends houses. We never had any other children as this broke both of our hearts. It took us years to even smile again after that." I saw many years of grief on this man's sad face.

Once the man calmed down some I asked for a tour of the small house. I could see his wife's belongings were still in the closet and even on top of what must have been her dresser. In the kitchen I found the refrigerator was indeed not working, leaving the man with no place to store fresh food. I asked about his eating habits and the man said, "I do not have much of an appetite. I just have canned soup or a peanut butter sandwich." I asked when the last time he had actually had a hot meal was and he could not answer me. I made a call to a volunteer I knew would be a perfect match for this man. This volunteer said he would be over as soon as possible with a hot meal.

While we waited for the meal to arrive I went through the rest of the man's home and finances. There were several leaks in the roof that needed repair and a plumbing repair that was needed. I had these repairs coordinated as well as arranging a repair to his older model car. I made a note to replace his refrigerator with a recently donated one. After going through his outstanding bills I made a list of those we would pay, including some into the future. I also had an idea for a job lead from someone that has given our older clients jobs in the past. I knew they liked to hire older people because they had a good work ethic and he found them to be more trustworthy. I called this employer and shared with him this man's job skills. After hearing what he was capable of doing he was happy to give this man a job trial. The man was so excited about this job trial his face broke into a smile I had not seen since I arrived. The man said, "I will make sure he is so happy with me that I am hired full-time." I was happy to finally hear some positive words from this man that had endured much.

Just when we were wrapping up our first visit the senior volunteer arrived. He came in with a bag containing a hot meal and some fresh fruit as well. I joined in their conversation for a few minutes as I could see they were the perfect match I had thought they would be. This volunteer had lost his own wife to cancer ten years ago and at the time had become a volunteer delivering food and other assistance to keep him busy. As I listened to them talk I knew exactly why God had directed him to The Time Is Now to Help as a volunteer. He knew what this man was going through and I was sure he would be able to help lift him out of his depression. I excused myself and promised to visit again in a few weeks.

My last visit I was happy to find a man that was excited about his new job and new life. He loved the job he had been hired for and his employer had called me to share what a great job he was doing. The man had joined a bible study group and grief group with his volunteer. The man shared he had already made some friends he knew would be friends for life. He said, "I thought I was the only person around here that had been through so much loss. I didn't realize there were so many people that had been through the same things I had. It really helps to talk and share my experiences. I feel so relieved of my sadness since I joined these groups. The bible study has helped me to give my grief and burdens up to God. My only regret is I did not know these people when my wife was so sick." I was so happy and

relieved to hear he now had friends and good people surrounding him. The man also showed me the work done on his house and car. He proudly showed me the food in the refrigerator we donated to him. I noticed the new spring in his step that replaced the stooped shuffling walk of a man consumed with grief and financial stress. When I was getting ready to leave the man asked, “Do you think we could pray together before you leave?” We both bowed our heads and prayed for the positive changes in his life to continue. We also prayed for all of “You” and your generosity that allowed us to provide this desperately needed assistance. God Bless you for your compassion and caring and sharing for God’s creations.

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, Clarence & Marilyn Schawk Family Foundation, Martin Business, The Petco Foundation, Petco – Lake Geneva, St. James United Methodist Church, Interstate Insurance Group, Thelma Meyer, Delavan Service League, Margarie Egger, Elkcast Aluminum, Elkhorn Lions Club, East Troy Lioness Club, Elkhorn Chemical & Packaging, George & Leah Rozhon, Jerry & Joyce Byers, Lester & Veronica Rieck, Barbara Kufalk, Joan Marabito Rietz, Jeanette Logterman, John & Marian McClellan, Yvonne Mol, George & Loretta Clettenberg, Robert Ribordy, John & Kathy Poiron, William & Lynn Koukal, Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Dunham, 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:** Carla Matz in memory of Heidi Danner and Harry Bublitz.

**Honoraries:** Mike & Natalie Reno in honor of Mike Reno’s 26<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

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

**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. New hours: Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Closed on Tuesdays. Please visit often knowing your support will provide life changing assistance for the fellow creations in their care. Inspiration Ministries is home for up to 80 residents that live with multiple physical and mental challenges. I thank all of you for helping. For more information visit [www.inspirationministries.org](http://www.inspirationministries.org).

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