

Dear W.C.,

I have been reading about all the good work you do in our community but never thought I would need to write you a letter. I am not writing for myself but for a family that lives down the street. I have been friends with the woman for years. She has been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). She had to give up her job now because it is progressing quicker than expected. They are struggling due to the loss of her income. I drove by yesterday and noticed the husband carrying her up their front stairs. This brought tears to my eyes as just last year she was running up those stairs. Could you check on this family as I know they are probably struggling both financially and with the limited accessibility in their home.

Dear Readers,

Again an observant, caring neighbor has brought someone struggling to our attention. For many of our areas of assistance we rely on letters, referrals and our observant neighbors and teachers to make us aware of our fellow creations in desperate need. This family was living with not only the fear and stress of a life-changing disease diagnosis; they were also living with the fear and stress of impending poverty. We knew we could at least make their struggle with poverty easier, allowing them to focus on what they could do to make the woman's life more comfortable and accessible.

I arrived at the address and found there were indeed steps to both the front and back entrances. I knocked on the door and it was answered by who I assumed was the husband. I introduced myself and told him about The Time Is Now to Help. He asked who had referred them to our organization. I told him, "One of your wonderful neighbors." The man tried to contain tears that threatened to spill down his cheeks as he said, "One of my neighbors? I didn't think any of them knew what we were going through. I have kept this to just our family for the most part. We are still trying to understand how this will affect our lives in the future. It is all so overwhelming." I could see he was struggling with the diagnosis and their uncertain future. I said, "If we could talk for just a little while maybe I can help you sort out the financial changes you are going through. I have helped several families that have gone through this before and I have learned a lot from them about what to plan for." The man stepped aside and invited me inside their home.

The man brought me to a woman sitting in a chair. He introduced me to his wife who held out a trembling hand for me to shake. Her voice shook as well as she said hello. The husband told his wife why I was there and she too was happily surprised that one of their neighbors would write a letter in their behalf. I commented, "Your neighbor was concerned for your family and wanted to find a way to help. Writing to us was the best way they knew how." After we spoke for a few more minutes I could see the woman was tiring. The husband asked if she needed anything and then told her to rest while we talked in the other room. She seemed relieved to not have to talk any longer and I watched as she immediately closed her eyes to rest.

The husband and I went to the adjoining room to talk. The man asked, "How does this usually work? I have never asked for help before in my life. Before my wife's disease began

to affect her ability to work I would have just asked you to leave and not accepted any help. Now that she can no longer walk on her own and is starting to have other symptoms we are realizing this is much more than we were prepared for. We have two teenage children that are at school right now and they need our support still. We had a small savings which has already been decimated by what we have had to pay out of pocket for her medical costs. Now we have to find a way to make alterations to this house or we move out and lose our security deposit. I can't imagine trying to move right now on top of everything else..." The husband put his head in his hands and wiped at his eyes, again trying to keep the tears from falling.

I asked the husband if he would like to pray with me and he nodded his head, whispering, "I would like that very much." We said a wonderful prayer, pouring out our hearts to the Lord, praising him for his blessings amid the struggles and asking for his guidance and healing. After we finished our prayers I began to ask the father the personal questions I must ask to find out the best course of action to take to remove the pains of poverty.

The man shared with me the very private financial changes they had been struggling with. He said he had been hiding a lot of the bills from his wife to save her any more worry or stress, knowing this would not help her disease progression in any way. I asked the husband if he had asked the landlord about making the home handicap accessible. The husband said he had not. I suggested he contact the landlord immediately to find out if he make the home handicap accessible as this would be the deciding factor in if they would have to move or not. The man asked, "Right now?" I said, "Would you like me to call?" He declined my offer saying, "I have a good relationship with our landlord. We have rented this home for five years now. I should be the one to ask." I told the man to tell his landlord that The Time Is Now to Help would be putting a wheelchair ramp on the home. The husband asked, "You will?" I answered, "It is up to your landlord now so let's see what he has to say."

After his honest conversation with his landlord, the landlord had not been aware of the difficulties the family was encountering; he not only allowed the installation of the wheelchair ramp he also offered to lower their rent slightly each month and extended their lease for three more years. This would allow the family to stay in the home they were familiar with and not have to endure a stressful move. I took a brief walk around the home, pointing out a few other areas to change to make the home easier to maneuver for his wife as she began to rely more and more on a wheelchair.

The husband and I went over the bills he had been hiding from his wife. The utilities were overdue. We paid these to bring them up to date and paid some into the future. The husband shared they had already sold his wife's car but now they knew they would be needing a handicap accessible van in the near future. He had already been lifting his wife in and out of the car in addition to carrying her up and down the stairs.

We were nearly finished with our visit when we heard the wife weakly calling from the adjacent room. The husband jumped to his feet and rushed to see what she needed. I gave them their privacy as I heard him help his wife to the bathroom. After a few minutes he returned, apologizing for his abrupt departure. I reassured him his wife's needs were much more important. I wrote down some additional help that he could apply for and he was very

grateful for the suggestions I made. I again watched as the husband looked away trying to hide his tears. I said, "I know this is a huge change for not just your wife but for your whole family. We have volunteers that can help if needed and there are other people that can help too. Don't be afraid to ask for any more help if you need it. We are here for you." This time the man's tears fell. After saying my goodbyes to the wife the husband walked me to the door. At first he began to shake my hand but then said, "I owe you a hug not a hand shake." I hugged the husband and told him I would contact him soon with the date for the ramp installation and when we found a suitable handicap accessible vehicle.

Two weeks later a ramp was quickly installed by a caring construction crew. We also had them make a few of the modifications in the home. A wheelchair accessible van was found and delivered to the stunned family. The wife was trying to wipe away her own tears as she struggled to say, "How can I thank The Time Is Now to Help? We would never have been able to get to my doctor's appointments or even my daughters school events without this van. I feel so much better knowing my family will not have to go through this with me alone. And the ramp has allowed me to stay here with my family. I could not have expected my husband to keep carrying me up and down those stairs." The wife seemed exhausted again from her excitement and short speech. I watched as the husband lovingly wheeled her up the new ramp and brought her inside to rest.

Since our assistance over a year ago the woman is now in hospice. Her family is trying to prepare the best they can for what they know is soon to come. We have helped a few more times with utilities and van repairs. They have been able to manage on their own, even with the many missed days of work the husband has had to take. The husband and I have shared several more prayers and hugs of encouragement. We are so grateful for this caring and observant neighbor that felt in her heart that this family was struggling. If it was not for her love for her fellow creations this family would have certainly felt the sharp pains of poverty in addition to the pains of a debilitating disease stealing away their loved one. Thank "You" for allowing us to help this family and the many families, senior citizens, the handicapped, children, veterans and single mothers helped each week due to your generosity.

There are many of our fellow creations turning to us for help or being referred by others. The children, the handicapped, the elderly, those that cannot fend for themselves, those living in desperate need will be crying happy tears of relief thanks to all of "You", the Fox Charities New Year Wish \$25,000 Matching Grant and The Time Is Now to Help working together to provide poverty relief. Please donate now knowing every dollar will be matched, doubling your donation. Together "We" make a difference removing the pains of poverty for our fellow creations. Thank you and God Bless you.

Health & Happiness, Love & 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, Barnabas Matching Grant, Kunes Country Auto Group, Gregg Kunes, Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation, Martin Business, J. Kruzan Construction & Remodeling, Bernard Labovitch, Hufcor Foundation, Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin, Grunow Family Fund, John Goodier, Ziegler Charitable Foundation, Edward Hechmann, Steven & Deidred Trumble, Mary Kay Ring, Bonnie Glennon, Gerald & Robin Dempsey, Robert Waddell, Joseph Shaughnessy, Twin Bay Charitable Foundation, Thomas Morrissy, John & Valerie Lincoln, Kramer F&I Solutions, Kevin Kramer, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schubert, Peter & Anna Vanderveld Foundation, Erich & Diane Lademann III, Judy Dishneau, Noreen Studnicka, Deborah Lapicola, Mike & Briann Huebner, Vena Bodine, Robert & Patricia Davis, Carol Hinners, Jill Weckesser, June Davidsen, James Zakos, Merwyn & Marilyn Taylor, Charles Horisberger, Roland & Diane Schroeder, Ellen Flanagan, Kenneth Jones, Mary Ellen Last, Mitchell & Patricia Smith, Donald & Edwina Shelton, St. James United Methodist Women, Robert & Linda Mylin, Creek Road Community Church Guild, Randall & Margaret Smith, Thomas Getzen, Frances Flucke, Roberta Collamore, 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: Sue & Mike Borden in memory of Gayle Leep. Jody, Craig Jr. and Cara Cook in loving memory of Craig Cook. Paul Ziegler in memory of his dear friend Dorith Brown. Patrick & Susan Cardiff in memory of Lisa Haydam. Carla Matz, Dan & Kati Bennett & Robert Bennett in memory of Heidi Danner and Harry Bublitz.

Prayer Chain: Please pray for healing for the following people: Mike, Caroline, Susan, Jennifer, Clarence, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynasha, Brandi's Grandma, Marilyn & Sal.

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 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed Sundays. 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.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org