

Dear W.C.,

7/20/09

I am worried about my neighbors. I have lived next to them my whole life. I love them both like grandparents. I used to cut their grass and help them with their grocery shopping but for the last few months they have begun to act strange. Let me explain.

When I was a child they used to always bring us over plates of cookies, muffins, or cakes. They taught me how to ride my bike with no training wheels. They showed me how to plant flowers and how to mow the lawn. As they became older I noticed they were having a hard time keeping up with their yard work so I started to mow their lawn whenever I did ours. When I was through my neighbor would always give me \$5.00 and some fresh baked treats. I didn't want the money but they insisted. Lately I noticed they are mowing their own lawn again. When I knocked on their door to ask if I could help they wouldn't let me in and said they were fine. They didn't need my help. I noticed they are not grocery shopping on their usual day anymore. They followed the same schedule for years so this is very unusual for them. They also leave almost all their lights off and I did not hear their air-conditioning on when it was very hot the other day. I am just so worried that something is wrong. I think they are too embarrassed to tell me they can't pay me anymore to mow their lawn. I do not want to be paid for that anyway. I just want them to be o.k. I know they will never tell us if they are having trouble. Could you please check on them W.C.?

Dear Readers,

When I paid a visit to this senior couple they were very surprised to find me at their door. They were regular readers of The Time Is Now to Help column when they used to buy a newspaper. They said they hadn't been able to buy a newspaper for quite some time. They asked me how I knew they were in trouble. I told them a very concerned angel had written to me on their behalf. This brought tears to their eyes. They knew immediately who that concerned angel must be. They then talked about the special bond they had with the child next door as they watched them grow up. They said how they always felt like they were their own grandchild. I later found out they had lost their only child to a drunk driver.

When I asked if the young person's concern was well founded, they hung their heads in despair and embarrassment. It seems the elderly gentleman had lost his pension. They truly needed that extra amount to get by. They were no longer able to afford to buy enough food or pay for anything extra. They did not use their window air-conditioner even though it was extremely hot and humid the day I visited. I could not imagine how they could live in such heat at their age. I turned on their air-conditioner and they immediately wanted to turn it off. I convinced them that The Time Is Now to Help would pay their utility bill for this month

and the following. I made them promise to turn on the air-conditioning if it was hot outside. I made my usual request to look around their kitchen. I found only enough food for a few small, simple meals. Even the neatest homes will have a bag of cookies or crackers on the counter when no guests are expected. Their refrigerator had only nearly empty condiments. They had been living on dry cereal, soup, and noodles. It is so heart breaking to find so little food at 70% of the visits I do. A year ago maybe 35% of the homes I went into had empty cupboards, now nearly all the cupboards and refrigerators I open are empty. Paying rent and mortgage payments are the first thing on everyone's list to prevent homelessness. The fear of no shelter drives our fellow American's to hunger, darkness, and living without heat or air-conditioning due to trying to limit their utility bill or, worse yet, the utilities are already disconnected. This is also becoming a very common thing I am finding.

After checking for food, and finding so little, I turned to look at both of them. The elderly man was slouched over in the kitchen chair with his head in his hands. His wife of many years sat next to him with one hand on his back, and the other wiping the tears from her face. I held them both in my arms to console them. I then reminded them of the many years they taught and loved their neighbor, just like family. I told them it was time to let that love flow both ways. With that the elderly gentleman wiped his tear filled eyes and said, "I do love our neighbors, and their child who has grown up into such a wonderful person, is like our own." I said, "God bless both of you. Let God's compassion flow both ways. No more shutting out your neighbor's. Accept the love and caring they are offering." The wife acknowledged this with a burst of fresh tears, saying to her husband, "We need that love."

I told them I had their neighbor grandchild waiting to go eat with them. They looked a little shocked at first but I got them up and ready to go. All four of us went out for a good meal. I watched their bond with their young friend become even closer.

I gave them several grocery gift certificates and gas vouchers so they could afford to get some food immediately. I told them about the W.C. Food Pantry and they promised to pay them a visit. I also reminded them how their neighbors wanted to help. All the years they had spent teaching the child next door as the parents worked, all the years they had brought over a pie or casserole, the neighbors wanted to help them now. They were happy to mow their grass, help them with groceries, do a household chore. It was time to let them, and us, repay the years of kindness. They tearfully accepted the offer of assistance.

Now not only are they living better on a fixed income, they also are happy for the help and company. Thanks to all of your Caring and Sharing, and a neighbor's love, we were able to greatly improve the lives of this senior couple.

Please take advantage of Richard Driehaus' Matching Grant. There are many fellow creations desperately in need of our help to ease their pain and suffering of poverty. Every

dollar you donate will be matched by Richard, doubling your donation. At this time we have many requests for assistance. Please, Please Help.

Thank you for Caring and Sharing.

*Health & Happiness, God Bless Everyone, W.C.*

**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:** Paper Dolls, Douglas Thorp, Kim Olsen, Mary Cucchi, Heidi Hall, Lisa Loepke, Diane Palma, Joan Rietz, James & Janice Batten, Ron & Carolyn Bloch, Eileen Walsh Grzenia, Martin O'Brien, Drescher Family Charitable Foundation, W.C. Family Resource Center/Food Pantry volunteers, Michael & Sue Borden, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Bill & Lois McEssy, 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.

**Food Pantry info:** If you would like to volunteer at the W.C. Food Pantry/ Family Resource Center please call Frank Guske, Jr. at (312) 656-6178. Frank is coordinating all volunteer efforts. Please volunteer for a two hour shift Wednesdays or Saturdays, between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

**Desperately Needed Cars:** If anyone has a car they are thinking of trading in, or have an extra car you are not using, please think of sharing it with one of the many in desperate need of transportation.

**Goodsearch for The Time Is Now:** Search the web with [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and help to raise funds for The Time Is Now to Help. Just make [www.goodsearch.com](http://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](http://www.timeisnowtohelp.org)