

Dear Readers,

This week's column involves a situation that was brought to my attention by a friend. They called me very upset over what they had just witnessed. They are donors and read our stories of compassion, but had never seen true poverty and need with their own eyes. As many people do they live their very busy, but very blessed lives, somewhat in a bubble. Often times poverty and suffering is not on clear display. In this instance, this moment in time, my friend truly felt how blessed they are and how those less fortunate suffer in their need.

I got a call from my friend on a cold, winter late afternoon. My friend had just left a home that was being sold at auction. An estate was selling off the property that was in much disrepair and should be torn down. When they opened the door of the small, rundown home, they were shocked to see that it appeared people were living in the home, though they were not present at the time. They saw sleeping bags on the floor and garbage in the trash can. They saw a few bags with clothing and personal items and a few toys. The home was extremely chilly, there was mold growing on the walls and most bulbs were burnt out. It was hardly a place for people to be living. They left and decided to come back later to find out who was living in the home.

When they came to the home later they noticed a very old, broken down car in the driveway. They knocked on the door and it was finally answered by a woman. They said she was obviously scared and asked what they wanted. When they explained they were selling the house and did not have a lease for her rental, she began to cry. She pleaded with them to not throw her and the children out on the streets. She said they did not have anywhere to go. The elderly woman that she had done some home health care for before she lost her job, had told her she could live there until she got back on her feet again. The elderly woman had never had her sign a lease or even asked for any rent. She just wanted her to keep an eye on the house and pay the utilities. She occasionally filled in when the elderly woman needed care, but never accepted any pay as she was living in the home rent free. The woman said she has been applying for jobs on the local libraries computers, and that's where she had been earlier that day. She did not receive child support. She had absolutely no money left to her name.

They did not know what to do with the poverty stricken woman and children, until they thought of The Time Is Now to Help. They called me and asked what they could do. They could not believe the living conditions, and felt even worse knowing young children were living in the mold infested, cold home. I promised them to pay a visit right away.

When I arrived at the dilapidated house I could see why my friends had been so upset. I see many less than ideal living arrangements, but this one was extremely poor. The overwhelming smell of mold when the door opened made me feel very sad that the mother and children were living in such terrible conditions. I knew it had to be affecting their health. I introduced myself. The woman knew of The Time Is Now to Help, but had never requested any help. We spoke for a few minutes as I told the woman I have allergies and cannot tolerate any mold. After a short conversation she shared that both her children have had repeated respiratory infections and coughs since they moved in. The mother had an idea the

mold smell might be causing this but had nowhere else to go other than living in her car. That would not have been acceptable with children either.

After I assured her we were moving her to a safe, clean motel until we could make other living arrangements, she agreed to my plan. It only took us about ten minutes to get everyone and everything loaded in her car. As she had hardly any gas in her car I had her follow me to a gas station to fill up her car. I delivered them to a warm, clean motel with a full kitchen, where they could live until a job and housing could be secured.

The next day I made some calls to find this mother a job. She had good skills but had lost her last job due to her children being repeatedly sick and she did not have anyone to care for them. It is a hard road for a single mother without any support from family or the children's father. They have no one to back them up during difficult times such as these.

Within a few weeks we had this mother interviewing for a job. The children's health was much improved within a few weeks of moving out of the mold infested old home. Once her job was secured we provided her security deposit and first month's rent for a very reasonable nice apartment. We also provided a recently donated car that was in much better shape than her previous car. It would get her to her new job.

When the mother and children came to see their new apartment all their faces lit up. The apartment was newer construction, very bright and full of light giving it a healthy feeling. The kitchen had newer appliances. There was even a washer and dryer in the apartment. The children kept asking, "Is this our new home? Are we really going to live here? Oh Mom! Is this home?" The mother looked at her children with tears in her eyes. The children looked at their mother, noticing the tears in her eyes. I could see they all loved the apartment yet were afraid it would not be for them. I told the three of them, "Yes, this is your new home. My dear friends who support The Time Is Now to Help want all of you to be in a warm, healthy place to live." The mother knelt down to hug her children as she told them, "Yes, yes this is our new home." She continued to cry tears of relief and sadness over all they had been through.

During our last conversation there were many tears spilled, but this time they were happy, grateful tears. The mother said, "My kids and I cannot thank The Time Is Now to Help enough. We felt so alone and scared. Then you showed up at our door and immediately our lives transformed. We went from a sickly, helpless family to a healthy, empowered one." I told her, "It was the hundreds of caring and sharing people that make up The Time Is Now to Help." She said, "Please thank all of them for our new life." I shared a hug with each of the now healthy children.

My dear readers and friends, what we do together is so special. Helping our fellow creations, our Caring and Sharing, doing God's good work, is life changing for those we help. God Bless all of you for making "Our" The Time Is Now to Help so special. Together we will continue to remove the many pains of poverty including, hunger, loneliness, fear and

homelessness. Together we provide hope, compassion, care, shelter, food, ...all the necessities of daily life, through our Caring and Sharing. God Bless all of "You" for helping.

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

Fox Charities New Year \$25,000 Matching Grant: Fox Charities has once again graciously stepped up to match your donation dollar for dollar, doubling your help to those in need. Please take advantage of this opportunity to double your Caring & Sharing. Fox Charities recognizes the pain and suffering of our fellow creations that struggle for daily necessities, especially now in this very harsh, cold winter. We need your compassion to make this assistance a reality. Together we can make a big difference in the lives of those suffering in poverty.

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, Dick & Jean Honeyager, The Summertime Foundation, Kunes' Country Stateline Superstore, Paul Ziegler, Ziegler Charitable Foundation, Unilock Chicago, Thomas & Mary Johnson, Geneva Lake Development Corp., AIG Matching Grants Program, Robert & Kelly Borden, Building Reserves, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Lawton, Gregory L. & Jean Marie Dexter, Corcoran Landscaping & Construction, Williams Bay Student Council, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, Bernard Labovitch, Bonnie Glennon, Marvin Rupp, Richard & Ann Weber, Francis & Eleanor Wall, Philip & Mary Lou Esmond, Allan & Nancy Cody, John & Sally Dicmas, James & Elaine Masterson, Mary V. Fitzgerald, Douglas & Jean Chase, Keith Naeve, Mary Ann Smith, Mary Ellen Last, Rudolph & Marlene Bialek, David & Carol Purdy, Lauren Grady, Eric & Erica Lawton, Phebe & Doug Watson, David & Jill Schaefer, David & Jill Schaefer, W.C. Family Resource Center/Food Pantry volunteers, and all the God loving volunteers of all our caring 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.

Honoraries: Frank & Lisa Taylor in honor of Merwyn and Marilyn Taylor.

Memorials: Marvin & Audrey Hersko in memory of Barbara Hersko & Don Wunderlin. Lois McCarthy in memory of Johanna Sterken. John & Nancy Wendt in memory of Carolyn Carlson.

Furniture Donations: Please contact Love, Inc. for all your furniture, clothing and household item donations. Call 262-763-2743 or 262-763-6226 to schedule pick-up. We are no longer affiliated with Chris Ann's Resale Shop.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org