

Dear W.C.,

I am writing to see if you can help my family. I am living with my husband of six years and my nine year old step-daughter. My husband has primary custody due to his ex-wife, the mother of his daughter, being a drug addict. She has made life very hard for our family. My husband fought hard to get custody of his daughter when he began to see signs of abuse and neglect. When his daughter was old enough to speak she began to tell him about her life with her mother, the wild parties, the many people having "sleep-overs" with Mommy, strangers coming into her room in the middle of the night, how she was hungry all the time because Mommy was too tired to get out of bed and feed her. The horrible things she told us shocked us but also gave us the strength to fight for our daughter's well-being. We used all our savings, sold our second car and lost our home just so we could pay the attorneys. We still have a payment we make each month.

My husband's ex-wife is supposed to be paying child support but no surprise she cannot hold a job. My husband's job is slow during the winter but should be picking up soon, if the weather ever starts to feel like spring. I work full-time but am only earning minimum wage and tips as a waitress. This winter has not been the best for either of our jobs. We find ourselves behind in our rent and utilities. I am so worried they are going to disconnect our utilities soon. It was worth all the hard work and expensive legal fees to make sure our little girl did not suffer any more abuse or neglect.

Dear Readers,

Drug addictions continue to plague all economic levels in our communities. We do not treat or counsel those that are suffering these addictions. That is not our mission or within our skills. We do refer these people for proper treatment but it is up to them to make the effort to seek help.

When I contacted this step-mother and father they told me of the many times they had tried to help the mother with her addictions. At first they had given her child support when she had custody of the daughter. She had used that money to buy drugs. They enrolled her in programs but she failed to show up. They had even taken her into their home for a while thinking it would help if they could keep an eye on her. She proceeded to steal their money and sell their personal items for money to purchase drugs. When they found her passed out with several "friends" in their home and found drugs in her possession they finally threw her out.

They kept the daughter even though they did not have legal custody. Several days later the mother showed up with the police demanding her daughter back. She had cleaned herself up enough so she could continue to get their child support money. The police said they had no choice since the law said the mother had primary custody. That was when they had decided they would do whatever it took financially to save the daughters life and regain custody.

It ended up taking almost a year and nearly everything they owned, but they finally won custody when the little girl ended up in the hospital due to abuse and neglect by the mother.

Now, due to the extremely long winter, the father's job did not start up as early as it did in the past five years. The step-mother is a low-wage earner that is using her hard earned funds to pay for food, gas for the car and help with the utilities. Without the husband's steady pay he was earning over the last several years they fell behind in their utilities and rent.

We sat down to go over their budget. I could see they would be able to survive except for the high monthly legal fee payments. The wife said, "We never even had credit cards until all these problems started. We had a savings account and saved for what we needed. I know we had to do this to save our daughter." I said to them both, "Well, let's see what we can do."

We called the attorney's office together to see if he could lower the monthly payments. I knew the attorney and he was very aware of The Time Is Now to Help. We made the attorney aware of their situation. I told him about their overdue rent, utilities and how really desperate these good people were. The attorney had a good heart when he said, "Sal, I was completely unaware of their hardship. If I cut their monthly payments by 60% will that help?" I told him that would be great. An agreement was made.

After we hung up the father and mother hugged each other and cried with relief.

After conversing with the father about his job situation I found he had been actively pursuing more reliable employment. He showed me all the places he had applied to. I saw one on the list I knew would hire him if I put in a good word and they had not already filled the position. I made a call and secured the job interview. This job would provide the income they needed, along with the step-mother's job, to make their new budget work.

The father said he had to meet his daughter's school bus so we all took a walk outside. I watched as their daughter raced off the bus to give both the father and the step-mother a happy hug. I could see she was a content and loved child.

It was time for the step-mother to leave for work so we walked her out so I could take a look at their car before she left. The father said, "Hopefully if I get this job we will be able to save enough to eventually get a second car. Until then my wife will have to ride a bike on days when I need the car for work." I asked how far this was and what time she worked until. The father said it was about three miles and she came home most nights around 9:30 or 10 p.m. He admitted she had rode her bike a few times when he was working sporadically over the winter, even in the bitter cold, just because his job was much farther. He would pick her up at night and put her bike in the trunk so she did not ride home in the dark.

After the step-mother left we went back inside to complete our assistance. I could see they needed our help catching up on the outstanding utilities and rent. They also really needed another car for the step-mother's safety. We had recently received a donated vehicle that was perfect for the step-mother. It was fuel efficient and would get her to her destination warm,

dry and safe. After I went over the list of assistance we would provide I looked up to see the father was fighting back tears. He was sniffing and his voice broke as he said, "I can't believe The Time Is Now to Help is doing all this for us. How can we ever thank you for giving us our lives back? All we have done for the last year is worry we will lose our daughter again when we get evicted. You have turned our whole lives around." I said, "It is not just me that wants you to succeed as a father and a family. It is everyone who supports The Time is Now to Help. I will tell them all how grateful you are for their help." I put my hand on the man's shoulder to console him as he shed tears of relief.

My dear friends, poverty is causing great pain among our fellow creations. Please help. If you give now your donation will be matched by the Fox Charities Spring \$10,000 Matching Grant, doubling your donation. Let us stand together and continue our good works of removing the pains of poverty. Together we will remove the many pains of poverty. God Bless all of "You" for helping.

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, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Paul Ziegler, Ziegler Charitable Foundation, Clarence W. & Marilyn G. Schawk Family Foundation, The Petco Foundation, The Rhoades Foundation, Daryl & Geri Braun, Aurora Health Care Employee Partnership Campaign, Fairfield Grange No. 679, Karin Collamore, Michael Glass, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schuberth, Lorna Klein, Barbara Bourjaily, Sid & Patty Johnson, Dawn Jorgensen-Heiser, Lynn & Ann Hanson, Gerald & Joyce Byers, Russo Drywall, Anthony Casper, John Poiron, Ron & Karen Teliszczak, Marilyn Desing, Eric Sunstrom, Judith McKillop, Donald & Judy Bouffiou, William & Dorothy Tookey, 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.

Memorials: "The Nestle Gang", Vicki Baumeister & Lorraine Briere in memory of Donald Briere. Bob Nordhaus & Marcie Hollman in memory of Cheryll Johnston. The following donations were given in memory of Lucille Shoppe: James & Eileen Dempsey, Roy & Judith Bartlett, Dorothy Papenfus, Daniel & Elaine Kelleher, Mary Elizabeth Lawrence, Richard & Karen Gudeyon, David & Edna Leason, Ronald & Barbara Lonze, Lloyd & Carol Behrens, Timothy & Darlene Sturtevant, Mary Dunham, Richard &

Elaine Gronert, Kevin & Nicole Papenfus,

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.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org