

Dear W.C.,

Could you please help a friend of mine from work? She is caring for her disabled husband that is pretty much housebound. He was in a terrible car accident. He had back surgery last year that left him in worse shape than before the surgery. He is in almost constant pain and the doctors have pretty much said there is nothing else they can do for him unless he wants to undergo another surgery. They are both afraid to even consider risking another operation that could leave him paralyzed.

My friend is a very hard working good wife and mother. Besides working full-time at a physically demanding job, she goes home to care for her husband and her five year old grandson. She has custody of her grandson. She recently shared with me that they are struggling financially. It must be bad if she is sharing this with me because in all the years I have known her she has never complained about anything she is going through. Not even in her husband's darkest hours after his failed surgery. I know her car has constant trouble. I have had to pick her up several times in the last few weeks when it wouldn't start. I know there are days she does not bring a lunch and always says she is on a diet, even though she is already thin. Whenever I make an extra lunch to give to her she always graciously accepts the food. Could you please check on this family for me?

Dear Readers,

I called the woman that wrote this letter to ask for contact information. She shared with me that she had told her friend about her letter written to The Time Is Now to Help on her behalf. The friend had agreed that she was in need of our assistance and had given her permission to share their contact information with me.

I called to arrange a time to visit. They had received an eviction notice the day before and were about to lose their electricity. I told her I would be right over.

They rented a small house right outside of town. It was rundown but neat. A man that appeared to be in his 50's sat outside in a lawn chair as a small boy ran around the yard chasing his ball. I watched them for a few moments before walking up to introduce myself. The man was struggling to stand, grasping his walker to shake my hand, and I could see the pain this was causing him. I told him to not get up and hurried over to shake his hand. I watched him try to find a comfortable position again in his chair. After a minute he said, "I don't know why I tried to do that. I keep thinking I'm the same as before that surgery. I was always so active and hard working. Then I move and feel the pain..."

It was easy to see the level of pain he was in, he actually had gone pale and had tears in his eyes. He closed his eyes to take a few deep breaths before finishing his sentence. "My wife is inside waiting to speak with you. I will stay out here if you don't mind. I am nothing short of useless to this family now." The loss of this man's ability to provide for his family was very hard on him.

I went to the door and was met by the wife. She invited me in to talk but I suggested we sit outside by her husband and include him in the conversation. I could see he needed to feel like he was still part of the family and any family decisions. The wife and I pulled up two chairs and sat down outside by the husband. He looked surprised to see us outside. I told him we all needed to talk together and find a way to improve their present financial situation.

At first we spoke about the circumstances that had caused the injury to his back and the failed surgery. They gave me the details of the next procedure the surgeon wanted to try. I could see their misgiving but it did not look like he had any other options. This was a decision that they would have to come to together. The decisions I wanted to help them with were related to their budget and finances.

We spoke about their son and daughter-in-laws arrest for drugs and the neglectful state their grandson was living in. The daughter-in-law had supervised visits but the son was still in jail. They were fiercely protective of the grandson as they said they would not be giving him back to either one of the parents unless the court forced them to do it. They said their grandson had shared some very terrible stories with them about his living conditions before he was “saved” as the grandson expressed it in his own words. The grandmother was both angry and had tears in her eyes as she recounted the condition her grandson was in when he came to live with them.

They were receiving some assistance but not enough to cover the medical expenses, car repairs, rent, utilities, food and other daily necessities. The husband/grandfather told me, “My disability should be approved shortly, but in the meantime we are too far behind to last until then.” The woman worked full-time at a cleaning company. She did not receive any benefits and had to pay for their own health insurance. I could see the areas that were eating up their income were the numerous car repairs, the many medications the husband was on and the large utility bills that were not paid in full all winter.

The woman had been cutting out her own food in order to have enough for her husband and grandson. I looked at the thin woman and asked her what would happen to her family if she fell ill. She looked shocked that I had asked such a question. She said, “I do not have time to fall ill. Who would take care of everyone and work?” I looked her in the eyes when I said, “You will fall ill if you do not take care of yourself. You need to eat as much as your husband and grandson do.” The husband said “I knew she was not eating so I would have enough. I kept telling her she had to eat but she would always refuse. What will I do if something happens to you? You must eat and take care of yourself.” I told the wife we would be helping them with their food insecurity and would be making sure they had enough food for all of them to eat at each meal. She shed tears of gratitude for the much appreciated offer of food.

I contacted their landlord and asked for a rent reduction if we paid the past due amount and two months ahead. The landlord agreed to our offer and apologized for his stressful eviction notice. He even offered to have some repairs completed that the family had mentioned needed attention to. I thanked him for helping.

The overdue utilities were brought up to date and paid into the future to allow them a financial cushion for the next two months to get back on their feet. We also gave them a donated vehicle that was in better shape, was more fuel efficient and with a lot less miles. This would provide them with reliable transportation and relieve them from the constant repair bills. They were overjoyed with the car and were even able to sell their older car for a little extra income to a mechanic.

It is now many months since this assistance was given. The grandfather had decided to undergo the back surgery as his disabling pain was worse and worse. They were very happy to share with all of "Us" that he has regained much of his mobility and has substantially less pain. He is even looking forward to returning to work and has a smile on his face once more. The man shared with me that our help is what motivated him to go through the second operation. He said he had been able to concentrate on his healing and not their financial struggles. It had made all the difference in the world in his recovery.

My dear friends, poverty is causing great pain among our fellow creations. Let us stand together and continue our good works of removing the 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, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, American Culinary Federation-Geneva Lake Chapter, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Paul Ziegler, Ziegler Charitable Foundation, Clarence W. & Marilyn G. Schawk Family Foundation, The Petco Foundation, Bill & Helen Johnson, Badger High School FFA, Roberta Collamore, Michael Glass, Dan & Regina Mehring, Beth & Jody Rendall, Donald & Anne Ogne, John Poiron, Robert & Mary Winter, Sid & Patty Johnson, 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:** Jody Cook in memory of her husband Craig. In memory of the great father he was, and still is in spirit to his children Craig, Jr. and Cara. He will forever be in our hearts and thoughts every day.

Norbert & Bonnie Kegley in memory of Richard Neudorff.

Kathryn Roen in memory of her Mom Darlene Roen-Parks.