

Dear W.C.,

I was told by someone at my church to contact you about my current situation. I am a 77 year old senior citizen living on Social Security. I was doing handy man work here and there to make ends meet before I had my stroke six months ago. It has been a long recovery. I am able to drive again but I do not have enough money for gas. I can barely pay for rent and I am behind in my utilities. I had a little saved for my retirement but that was used up in a few months. I hope I can return to doing my handy man work soon but I am afraid my utilities will be disconnected by then. All this stress and worry over my financial situation makes me feel sick and anxious.

Dear Readers,

I have found many senior citizens unable to get by on their Social Security. My own mother would never have been able to get by on her own for so many years without my help. I watched her struggle to stand for hours as a beautician on her arthritic knees and hips just because she knew she needed the little bit of extra income she earned from her job. She had so much pride she would not even ask her own son for help, but I always made sure she was well cared for without her having to ask. One day I finally convinced her to retire after 52 years as a beautician. My mother never made a lot of money but she loved those she served. I have found many of our senior citizens have this same pride and do not easily ask for our assistance. When they do ask their situation is often times worse than they tell me. This was the situation I walked into with this senior gentleman.

I arrived for my visit and found this senior gentleman living in a terribly run down home. The front stoop and stairs were falling away from the house and tilted so badly I wondered how he even navigated them after a stroke. Several windows were cracked and the front door did not even latch properly. I knocked and waited as I heard someone shuffling slowly to the door. The door was opened a crack and then thrown open as the gentleman evidently recognized who I was. He smiled and said, "Well I'll be. You are for real. I always see your face in the paper but never thought I would see you at my front door." I accepted his invitation into the small dimly lit home.

After a quick tour of the small home, and noting the condition of the home, we sat down to talk. I asked him how his recovery was coming along. He shared with me how he had not known he was even having a stroke and waited too long to call an ambulance. By the time he was treated some irreparable damage had been done but he was enthusiastic about all he had already accomplished. He said he had been able to regain most his mobility but still struggled with his speech at times. He laughed when he said, "I am supposed to be using a cane but I refuse to use that darn thing. How am I going to go back to my handy man work if I am using a cane? Who would hire me?" I could see he had the spirit and determination of a much younger man.

I asked about any family or friends he was close with as I wanted to see what kind of support system he might have. He shared with me his beloved wife of thirty-five years had passed

away from cancer five years earlier. They had lost a child when he was only five to a tragic accident and they had not been able to have any other children. He told me about his “lady friend”. She had cared for him after his stroke when they would no longer let him remain an inpatient at the rehab center. She occasionally cooked for him and in exchange he would fix things around her house for her. He then added, “Before you go getting any ideas I want you to know we were all friends before we both lost our spouses. We are only friends. No one could ever take the place of my dear wife.” He had tears in his eyes when he said this and I could see the love and pain of loss he still carried with him. He added, “But she is the truest friend a person could ask for and she is a big help to me.”

We moved on to talking about his finances. The medical bills and utility bills were taking most of his Social Security. He did not have enough to cover the rent that seemed high for the rundown home he was living in. I asked who his landlord was and once I heard the familiar name I suggested we find a better rental. The man said his “lady friend” had told him she had a room he could rent whenever he was able to move. He said, “She told me I could stay there for free but I know she has her own financial struggles. I would pay her a fair rent for that room and we could split the utilities. It would be great for both of us.” I offered to call his landlord to see about getting out of the lease. It took some persuading on my part and I offered to pay the one month overdue rent the elderly gentleman owed.

Looking around I could see very few belongings but knew he would need help with moving these items. I had some volunteers I knew could help him with this move. When I offered to send volunteers to pack and move his items he was again close to tears. I gave him a hug and said, “Let’s give your lady friend a call and tell her she has a new roommate.” This brought a smile back to his face as he hugged me in return. After listening to their happy phone conversation I could see they shared a special friendship that had helped them both through good times and bad. It was a relief to know he would not be alone and had a trusted friend.

After his move he would be able to afford his expenses going forward, even if he was not able to return to his handy man job. I could see this was a goal for him that had helped with his determined recovery and something he really enjoyed.

Thanks to “Your” help this elderly gentleman was able to live independently, without the constant financial stress that was impeding his health. He and his “lady friend” continue to happily share a rental. They have both been able to now afford healthier food and share a car, allowing the gentleman to sell his car and use the money to pay off his medical bills and save a little bit for emergencies. We together have removed the pains of poverty for this senior citizen.

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 & Marilyn Schawk, The Petco Foundation, Bill & Helen Johnson, The Harold & Bernice DeWeerd Family Foundation, Kathleen & Brian Hurdis Charitable Fund, First Financial Merchant Services, Badger High School FFA, Eastview Student Council, Lauren Grady, Vito & Betty Licari, Michael Glass, Karen Anderson, Delavan Service League, James & Elizabeth Bach, Dennis & Jeanne Ludwig, George & Leah Rozhon, Nancy Stone, 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: Joseph & Maureen Shaughnessy in memory of their fathers.

Edward & Anna Marie Cygan in memory of Kay Mack.

Carla Matz in memory of Harry Bublitz.

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