

Dear W.C.,

I have a friend who is going through a very hard time. She is a single mother of two children. Her ten year old son has physical and learning disabilities that forced her to take many days off work to care for him. She eventually lost her job and has been unable to find a job that would allow the flexibility she needs. She has to home school him and provide a lot of physical care. Her ex-husband pays no child support. My friend does receive some assistance but not enough to get by. She has applied for housing and utility assistance but was told there is a long waiting list. She does not have that long before her utilities will be disconnected and they face eviction. I wish I could help them myself but I barely make ends meet and live in a small apartment with my own two kids. Is there any way you could help my friend?

Dear Readers,

I contacted the friend that wrote the letter of request and made arrangements to meet with the two women. The following day I was at the door of the apartment the mother rented with her two children. The friend was waiting for me and opened the door right away. After introductions and showing my identification they invited me inside.

The apartment was not that large and did not have many belongings in it. A few chairs and a table were all I saw. Not even a television was in sight. The mother introduced me to her son and fourteen year old daughter, who was caring for her brother in his room while we talked. The daughter seemed to be a very good care taker as she spoke to her brother, trying to coax him into saying hello. The mother tried to encourage him to speak. I said to the son, "It is very nice to meet you." I could see him struggling to get the words out so I waited patiently as he finally said, "Nice to meet you." The mother, sister and friend all congratulated him on his efforts. Seeing they were trying to encourage his speech I congratulated him as well. This brought a smile of accomplishment to the boys face.

When we were in the kitchen, out of ear shot of the children, the mother explained some of the challenges her son faced. He had been born premature and with a genetic disorder. His disabilities required around the clock care. The grandmother had helped to care for him in the past so the mother had been able to work outside the home. Now the grandmother was in an assisted living center and unable to provide the care he needed. The mother said she had tried a daycare in a woman's home to care for her son over the winter but he had ended up catching every other child's illness. When he developed pneumonia and was hospitalized several times the mother had to repeatedly take off work, far beyond her allowed days. She was finally let go but did not hold it against her past employer. She said they were a small business and could not afford to keep her on. She had realized that she would be unable to work again as his disabilities worsened as he got older.

I asked the mother about her present financial problems that needed to be addressed in order to prevent her family from becoming homeless or living without utilities. She showed me the overdue invoices and late notices. The mother said, "We live very simply." Right now I only have a government issued phone with a few minutes on it for emergencies. We do not even

own a TV or have internet. Several times a week I take my son to the library to use the computer as he enjoys it very much. We walk as much as we can. I have a wheelchair for my son if we are going on longer walks as he is not able to walk very far. I ride my bike to the grocery store. We only use the car if the weather is bad or we need to take my son to the doctor.” I asked if I could look around the apartment and was not surprised to find a refrigerator and cabinets with hardly any food. All the rooms were very barren of furniture and personal items. The mother commented that she had sold all she could when she had been let go. This had given them barely enough money to get by while they were waiting for their assistance to begin.

The mother was in tears as she said, “I was so scared when I realized we had hardly anything left to sell and I was denied benefits yet again. Do they expect me to just go to work and leave my son alone or with his sister when she should be in school? Do they realize how expensive it is to pay someone to provide the level of care he needs? Do they expect me to find my ex-husband and force him to pay the back child support he owes for years and years? I don’t know what else to do.” I told her about how all of “You” would be there to give her the helping hand she needed. I explained how The Time Is Now to Help is not just myself but a large group of caring and sharing people that have come together to provide help assistance to our fellow creations. She asked her friend how she had found us. The friend said, “I found out about The Time Is Now to Help through my church.” The two friends hugged each other as the mother said, “I’m sorry I am not much of a friend. I just do not have the time or money to hang out or do the things friends normally do together. But please know I love you and I thank you for trying to find help for me and the kids.” The friend answered her by saying, “You are a great friend and a great mother. I don’t need someone to get my nails done with or go out to lunch. I need someone who will be there for me when I hit a rough patch in life, and I know you are that kind of friend.” I had tears in my eyes as I watched the friends hug again but this time they were both crying as they hung on to each other.

We went over the mother’s bills and budget. The rent was only a few weeks late as she had used every penny to prevent the family from becoming homeless. We paid the overdue rent and two months into the future. The utilities were scheduled for disconnection in two days. They were brought up to date and paid some into the future to help until her assistance was approved. This assistance would make all the difference between homelessness, hunger, fear and lack of utilities for this mother and children living in poverty. I made plans to follow up with the mother in a month to see if she had heard any news about her pending assistance.

As planned I contacted the mother in six weeks to see how they were faring. The mother was very happy to report she had not only been approved for disability for her child but had also managed to track down the dead beat father of the children. He had left when the son was born with overwhelming odds against him, claiming it was all too much responsibility for him. Now the deadbeat Dad was going to be required to have child support withdrawn from his check monthly, as long as he managed to stay employed. The mother had her doubts but was determined to stay positive and hope her ex-husband had matured enough to at least take on some of the financial responsibility of raising a child with special needs. The relief in the

mother's voice was evident. I promised to share with all of you her gracious appreciation for all "We" had done to help her family in their struggle to survive.

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, Bill & Helen Johnson, The Harold & Bernice DeWeerd Family Foundation, Kathleen & Brian Hurdis Charitable Fund, Badger High School FFA, Eastview Student Council, Michael Glass, Nancy Geidel, Alex Dahlstrom, JT Marty, Gregory Swanson, Margaret Plevak, Karin Collamore, Stephen Ahlgren, Douglas Thorp, Richard Costa, Jamie Gwaltney, Margaret Guidarelli, Sid & Patty Johnson, Robert Ribordy, David Altwies, Carolyn May Essel, Marvin Hersko & Audrey Wunderlin-Hersko, Sylvester & Virginia Seick, Charles & Donna Corson, George & Laurretta Clettenberg, 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: Laina Papenfus in honor & thankfulness of her parents Tim & Dani Brellenthin.

Memorials: Sal & Corinne in memory of Harry Bublitz and his birthday. 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