

Dear W.C.,

I have been disabled for the last ten years, since I was a teenager. I was in a car accident that was so terrible I feel lucky to have survived. My boyfriend did not make it. I had a spinal cord injury that left me a paraplegic. I don't like to call myself that as inside I feel the same as I did before the accident. Unfortunately my body has limitations that keep me from being able to do most things others can do without even thinking. I watch people hop into their car and drive away with ease. I see people reach for items on the top shelf in the grocery store without having to ask a stranger to get it for you, or worse yet just do without because people tend to look over me in my wheelchair and pretend to not hear me when I ask for help. I do not let these things bother me as I know they do not mean to be that way, they just get uncomfortable when they see a young woman in a wheelchair.

The reason I am writing you is to request help with my utilities and rent. I usually just get by on my SSI but this month brought some unusual financial problems. My handicap accessible van is now over fifteen years old. It has needed many repairs this past year and I have had to do without as much as I can. Even that was not enough and now I find myself behind in my rent and utilities. My landlord raised my rent several months ago as well and I find it harder to make ends meet. I have a girl friend that is also disabled, but not in a wheelchair. We would like to move in together but do not have enough for first month's rent and security deposit in a handicap accessible rental we found. I will not be able to get my security deposit back from my present landlord as he told me he would need it to remove my wheelchair ramp and other so called damages I made to the property. He also is angry I am trying to break my lease. I am now stuck in this rental I can no longer afford. Can you help me find a way to improve my situation?

Dear Readers,

I went to visit the young woman at her rental duplex. It had a small wheelchair ramp going up two steps to the front door. I also noticed a door opener and a rundown older handicap accessible van in the driveway. I knocked on the door and it was answered by a young woman in a wheelchair. She knew who I was immediately and said she did not need to see my identification. I showed her my identification anyway. She looked at it and then at my face and said with a laugh, "Yes that is you."

After we spoke for a few moments at the door I asked if she wanted to come outside to show me her van. She obliged and I watched as she maneuvered her wheelchair expertly out the door and to the van without any assistance. She showed me how the lift mechanism often stuck in midair, sometimes leaving her stranded until the faulty wiring decided to work again. Keeping the battery charged was a constant problem as the alternator was bad. The tires were in need of replacement, the windshield had a big crack she said came from a rock thrown up by a truck several months ago and the speedometer was broken. I knew there would be even more mechanical problems found when we conducted a safety check. We had recently purchased a handicap accessible van from a gentleman that had been forced to purchase a new one as the lift could not handle his weight. This petite woman would be able

to use the purchased van with no problem as she looked extremely thin. I asked if she had been skipping meals as a way to save for the van repairs. She looked embarrassed as she stared at the ground, unable to meet my eyes as she said, "I know I shouldn't skip meals but it was the only way I knew I could try to save some money. I have been so hungry I get light headed. I try to distract myself but it is all I can think about. My landlord does not care as long as he gets paid his rent along with the increase. I had no other options or even anyone that could help me move to another rental so I signed the lease. I never should have done that." I could see this landlord was one of those people that prey on others weaknesses and did not care about his fellow creations.

When I heard how hungry this young woman was I made a call to a volunteer to drop off some food immediately. I could see the tears in the eyes of the young woman as I made the phone call. I asked if she would like to go over her budget while we waited so we went inside.

The small duplex had very minimal adaptations made to accommodate her wheelchair and disability. I sat at the only table in the duplex that had one chair next to it. The woman said, "That is the only chair for my friend when she visits. That is the person I told you about in my letter. We would love to be able to move into the other rental together if it is still available, if or when I get out of this lease." I asked the woman if she had any family or friends that help her. She shared with me that her mother had passed away several years ago but she had a special friendship with the mother of the boyfriend that had died in the car accident they were both in. The woman told me how the mother had helped her many times over the years, called her weekly to check on her, invited her to all holiday gatherings, visited her and would bring by food every now and then. I asked if she had ever asked her for financial assistance and the woman looked very upset. She told me how her own mother had wanted to sue the family for their sons negligent driving, even after they suffered the loss of their son. She had fought with her mother bitterly over her decision to not sue for damages. This had caused a rift in their relationship she said they had never recovered from. She was adamant when she said her late boyfriend's mother had barely enough money to get by herself and she had suffered enough. Her boyfriend was 19 at the time of the accident and did not have any insurance so most of the expenses of her accident and long recovery had fallen on her own family.

After reviewing the budget I could see she needed to get out of the lease and move on to a lower priced, friendlier landlord rental. The young woman showed me a budget she and her friend had done together, sharing expenses in the new rental, and it made much more sense than her struggling alone. I told her The Time Is Now to Help could help with the security deposit and first month's rent if I could get her out of the lease. I asked if she minded if I called the landlord to have my own conversation with him. She said that would be fine so I made the call. She watched me, wide eyed, as I got into a heated conversation with the man. By the time I ended the call she was released from her lease but the landlord refused to give back her security deposit, due to the rent being behind two weeks. He also wanted her moved out by the end of the week, which I knew could be achieved as long as the other rental was

still available. At least she would be able to move on from the overpriced rental. The woman was so relieved she was crying happy tears when she heard the news.

After a quick call to the new landlord to secure the handicap accessible rental the young woman gave a sigh of relief. Such a weight was lifted from her frail shoulders. She looked overwhelmed by the idea of having to move so quickly but I reassured her “We” could do this together.

Just as promised, the two women were happily moved into their new rental by the end of the week. The wheelchair accessible van I had thought would be perfect for her was indeed just right. It was reliable and the lift was just the right size for her wheelchair. Her overdue utilities were paid to allow them to get a new account set up and some was paid into the future on that account, allowing her enough funds for future emergencies so she did not have to go without food to pay for these unexpected expenses.

Several weeks later I made a follow up visit. This time when I knocked on the door I was greeted by a woman that was no longer frail looking. I commented on how well she looked and she said, “Thanks to The Time Is Now to Help I have been eating well and thank goodness my roommate loves to cook.” She wanted me to tell all of “You” that prior to our help she was lost in despair, financially distraught, starving herself to try and make ends meet, crying when alone, then all of “Us” came into her life and renewed her spirit with our love, and caring and sharing. She started to cry and reached out her arms. I leaned over and gave her a big hug. I share with all of “You” her tears of relief. Thank you Lord for bringing all of us together to make our world a better place.

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 those in desperate need.

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: Clarence & Marilyn Schawk, Fox Charities, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, Carolyn J. Gable Expect A Miracle Foundation, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Deanna Morgan, Therese Kuban, Aurora Health Care Partnership Campaign, Gene Krauklis, Judith Mackessy, Joanne Abbe, Shawna Kneipper, Mary Cucchi, Heidi Hall, Jeanne Mc Donald, Lorna Klein, Michael Glass, TSW Services, LLC, William & Jean Isaacson, Cynthia Schuele, Lawrence & Cynthia Rynning, Violet De Wind, Barbara Spiegelhoff, Gregory Swanson, Stephen Ahlgren, William Davit, Louis Ganser, Sylvester & Virginina Seick, Ellen Flanagan, James & Rita Barron, Eric Sunstrom, Barbara Kufalk,

Gerald & Joyce Byers, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schuberth, Lawrence & Barbara Thibault, Steve Thornton, 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: Kathy Rodgers and Robert Blumberg in celebration of Richard Driehaus' Birthday!

Memorials: Jody Cook in memory of her husband Craig Cook and their 31st Wedding Anniversary on July 30th. Carla Matz in memory of Harry Bublitz & Heidi Danner. Margaret Cardiff in memory of Mom Dot Cardiff. Robert & Mary Ann Zelenski in memory of "Muff" Lehman. The following donations were given in memory of Clifford "Kip" Snudden: Duick & Company, S.C., Mary Hayden, Florence Merkin, Joyce Stickney and Geraldine & Bob Ferguson.

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