

Dear W.C.,

I am leaving for school and worry about my mother and siblings. I received a scholarship and financial aid so I could attend college and try to better my chances of not living the rest of my life in difficult times. My mother tells me to not worry about her and the children, to just leave and put all this behind me. How can I do that when I love them and know how they are living? I do not know if I will even have a home to come back to when I get out for breaks. I have worked every summer and after school for the last four years to give my mother to help pay the bills. I had my own car and helped run errands and did after school care for my siblings. My father has not made any child support payments or visited any of us for the last three years. My mother works two part-time jobs but runs short when her car needs repairs or we get a high utility bill. My mother always encouraged me to get a good education because she never had the opportunity to get one herself. She is a great Mom and so deserving of your help. Please visit my family and see for yourself what they are going through.

Dear Readers,

I called the phone number the daughter had provided on the letter. It was not answered by the mother but I did receive her voicemail. I left a message for her to call me back, explaining who I was and the letter received from the daughter. I knew the mother was probably screening her calls from bill collectors and would not answer an unknown phone number. In about thirty minutes I received a call back from the mother. She seemed embarrassed as she told me she was screening her calls and had no knowledge of her daughter writing this letter for assistance before she left for college. The mother told me she had called her daughter after listening to my voicemail message, asking her to verify if this was true. I told her we were indeed for real and asked if she would like to discuss possible assistance for her family. I could tell the mother was crying on the phone when she answered, "Yes please. If my daughter is this worried about us I will do my best to try and relieve her concern."

I arrived at the rundown duplex the single mother and two children were living in. The mother answered the door on the first knock as if she had been waiting by the door. After showing my identification I could see she felt somewhat awkward as she invited me inside. I asked if the children were home and she assured me they were. I thought maybe if they were present for the initial introduction she would feel more comfortable so I told her to invite them to the door to meet me. I met the two siblings the letter writer had been so worried about. They were a ten year old girl and twelve year old boy. They both were very polite when we met, shaking my hand. We all talked about school and they shared how much they missed their big sister. After a few minutes I could see they all were more comfortable and the mother told them they could go back to doing their homework. The mother and I sat and began to talk.

The mother again shared with me her embarrassment and dismay over the daughter writing for help. She then confessed she had gone to our website and read some of the past columns showing how our assistance made a difference in the lives of the poverty stricken. She said she had never heard of an organization like ours and asked some questions about The Time Is

Now to Help. I answered her questions and added how all of “You” make our good works possible. The mother said, “You must have many good God loving friends to receive so much help with all you do.” I smiled at this and said, “Yes, we have many God loving friends and supporters that care about you and your children. We want to make sure you do not become homeless, are not living without utilities, and are not going hungry. We also want to relieve the stress and worry of poverty for you and your loving daughter away at school.” The mother began to cry when I said this. She shared with me how she had married young, having her oldest daughter at the age of 19. The mother told me how she and her husband had been high school sweethearts, until he started drinking. His drinking turned into abuse and womanizing. By the time the mother realized he was not going to stop drinking and return to being the man she had married they had three children together. After a difficult divorce and custody battle the mother was left with hardly anything but she won the primary custody of her children. The mother said how she did not care that she lost out on all their belongings and financial help from her ex-husband as long as she had her children safely in her care. The father never bothered to visit the children and paid his support sporadically at best. Having never worked full-time, due to her husband having been unreliable with watching the children while she worked and never having had time to receive further education, the mother finds herself working at low paying, unskilled part-time jobs.

I went over the budget for the mother and saw the recent short fall was due to a car repair and a medical bill for a recent trip to the emergency room for one of the children. The mother went through her expenses carefully with me and I could see she had a good grasp on her financial situation. It was a juggling act for her without the child support that was now three years behind. The mother told me she believed her ex-husband had moved out of the country or was working for cash out of state. The mother just shook her head sadly saying, “That was not the caring man with a big heart I married. It all went bad when he started drinking. The man I married would never have deserted the children he loved and left us to struggle.”

I could see the poverty stricken existence they were living in the rundown duplex. The few pieces of furniture were worn and old. There was a shortage of food in the refrigerator and cupboards. The utilities were on the verge of disconnection. The mother shared that she did not have enough money for the children to participate in school activities and had not been able to even buy the required supplies. I reassured her we would help to bring their utilities up to date and pay some into the future to help with their expenses. I also made a call to volunteers for a delivery of food. We provided gift cards so they could do some shopping for clothing and school supplies. Gas cards would help with the mothers commute between her two jobs. I also knew the mother would fare much better with a full-time job. The mother was surprised when I told her about a possible job opening I was aware of. She said, “That would be a dream come true. It would be wonderful if I could work while my children are in school, be home evenings with them and be able to pay our bills.” The mother even provided me with a resume she had made up several months prior when she had applied for another full-time job. I could see she would need a reference and some training but she was smart and motivated.

I called the business I knew had an opening at an entry level position, but it would still be an improvement over the two part-time jobs with odd hours and minimum wage. It also was closer to their rental so would not require nearly as much gas and wear and tear on her aging vehicle. I spoke to the owner about hiring the single mother. He was willing to give her a chance to prove herself on a trial basis. The mother arranged a time in between her two part-time jobs to put in a few hours with the new employer. She was so excited for the opportunity and extremely grateful for the gift cards that would allow her to pick out a few professional clothing items for herself.

I called the landlord and he knew about The Time Is Now to Help and who I was. I informed him about the repairs needed to his duplex. He told me how embarrassed he was that I had to call him and stated he would have the repairs done as soon as possible. I told him the repairs were very important. He could not let the mother and children live in these conditions. He was quiet as I spoke. When he spoke again he said, "I want to do more to help this woman and her children. I will reduce their rent \$150." I thanked him for this and told him what a difference this would make in their monthly budget. When I shared this with the mother she again shed tears of relief.

After looking at her car I knew it would need some repairs. I arranged for these repairs to be done the following day so she would be ready for her new job. When I was through looking at the car I said my goodbyes with a promise to return after the mother went to her new job the following week.

Before I could even do my return visit I received a phone call from the new employer. He shared with me how happy he was with the new employee I had referred to him. He confirmed she did have some job training needed but was willing to provide this as he said her personality and enthusiasm made up for any job skills she lacked. He said all his employees liked her and were happy with the positive attitude she was adding to their work environment. I was very happy to hear this myself and went right over to the mother and children's house to share the good news.

When I arrived I was happy to see the repairs that were being completed by the landlord. Before I even knocked on the door I took a moment to call the landlord and thank him for expeditiously completing the repairs to the duplex. The landlord said, "I thank you for bringing these repairs to my attention and allowing me help them." Just then the children ran to tell me about their shopping trip for school supplies and clothing. The ten year old told me how embarrassed she had been when they arrived at school for the first day and she did not have the supplies that most of the other children had. She showed me her new shoes and said, "Now my feet don't have to hang over the sides of my flip flops and I have gym shoes for gym class too." Both the children were extremely grateful for our help. The mother was crying as she hugged me and said, "This hug is for all of the people that were here to change our lives but didn't get to see it for themselves. Please share this with them." I share that hug now with all of "You" and your caring and sharing hearts. God Bless all of you for making our life changing assistance possible.

Please consider a donation at this time, knowing every dollar you donate will not only be used 100% to help the poverty stricken, but will also be matched by the Fox Charities Summer 2014 \$25,000 Matching Grant.

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, Clarence & Marilyn Schawk, James & Lynne Newman, Geneva Wells Motel, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, White River Cycle Club, Dick & Jean Honeyager, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Plymouth Tube Co., Rita's Wells Street Salon, DC Mitigation, Robert & Jean Heinz, La Grange United Methodist Church, Therese Kuban, Thomas Arnold, Thomas Getzen, John Poiron, Robert & Shirley Lipinski, Chris & Kelly Welch, Beth & Jody Rendall, David Hudec, Dave Hudec Law Office, James & Marilyn Dyer, Michol Ann Ford, Karen Anderson, Ronald Sweeney, Frank & Ann Huml, Jr., Cynthia Schuele, Sylvester & Virginia Seick, B. & Julie Balboni, Patricia Jankowski, Walter & Florence Strumpf, Robert & Mary Winter, Gerald & Cheryl Kuhn, Hedwig Spaight, Al & Ellen Burnell, Gregory & Betty Gruning, Jonathan & Sara Kaplan, William & Jean Isaacson, Roland & Diane Schroeder, 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: Robert & Patricia Davis in honor of Fr. Jim McKittrick for having served St. Benedict Parish so well for 14 years.

Memorials: Thomas & Beverly Eck in memory of Mary Anne Kirchsclager.

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