

Dear W.C.,

I am writing you this letter with a heavy heart. I have never had to ask for help like this before. I have been through a lot of tragedy in my life that would have broken many. I always tried to count my blessings and thank God for all the good things in my life, even when they were few and far between. I grew up in a family where physical abuse was considered normal. I always felt too helpless to do anything to stop it. My mother and father were both physically and verbally abusive to me and my elderly grandparents. I watched how they were mistreated and would cry tears of shame over how they were humiliated because they could not walk fast enough or get to the bathroom in time. My grandparents even tried to stand up for me but I saw how it only made things worse for them. When they died I vowed I would NEVER treat any living creature like that when I grew up, and I am proud to say I have not.

I cared for senior citizens as a CNA when I was a teenager. My parents made fun of my job. They did not physically abuse me any longer but the verbal abuse continued. I married as soon as I got out of high school just to get out of their home. I soon found myself with two children and working two jobs. My husband became abusive when he began to drink after the birth of our second child. I did not want that kind of lifestyle for my children or myself so I moved out and filed for a divorce. I managed to raise my two children without any help from him or anyone. My children are my whole world and we are very close. A year and a half ago my daughter was in a horrific car accident. She was a twenty-five year old single mother with a child of her own at the time. She was in the hospital in a coma for two months followed by two more months of rehabilitation and physical therapy. We now all live together. I have cared for my grandchild and my daughter ever since this accident. My daughter will be in a wheelchair the rest of her life due to her spinal cord injury. She also has lapses in her memory and speech at times. The doctors said these will continue to improve with time.

What we most need help with is a handicap accessible van. At this time I have to lift my daughter in and out of her chair when we need to travel to medical appointments or travel as a family with my grandchild. Even though she is petite it is extremely hard on my physically. We also could use some assistance with our utilities as we have fallen behind due to medical bills and car repairs. Sorry this letter has gotten so long but I wanted you to have some of my history so you could see I am a survivor and we will get through this. We are grateful for the lives God has given us, even with the rough times we have endured. If you choose to help us with these things we will be extremely grateful. Whatever you decide I will continue to pray for your charity and the work it does. I saw on your website all the good things your group has done. What a blessing The Time Is Now to Help is to the people in our communities.

Dear Readers,

I paid an unexpected visit to the address on the letter. I arrived at a small house with a ramp going to the front door. There was an older minivan in the driveway so I hoped to find the family at home. I knocked on the front door and heard some commotion inside. The door was

opened by a woman that looked to be in her fifties. She looked at me in confusion for a minute before I saw the recognition on her face. She smiled and said, “Sal, you came. My prayers have been answered. Come in.”

I entered the home and was greeted by the daughter in her wheelchair with a child hiding shyly behind her. The daughter said to the child, “Come over here and meet Mr. Sal. Shake his hand like we have been practicing.” The child politely came around the front of the chair and told me their name while shaking my hand. I also introduced myself to the daughter and we all talked together for a few minutes. The mother noticed the child was getting restless so told her she could go play in her room so we could talk without causing concern.

Once the child left I looked around and saw the hospital bed and lift in the middle of the small living room. I also noticed the children’s games and books on the table. The grandmother that had written the letter hurried over to straighten up the table even though I told her it was not necessary. She helped her daughter maneuver to the table and we sat to talk.

I spoke to the mother about her painful childhood. She told me she was not bitter as it had formed the person she was today. She said her training as a CNA and working with the elderly had taught her patience and compassion. We talked about the mother’s struggle to raise two children on her own. She was so proud of both her children. Her son was twenty and in the military. He had plans to continue his education when he was discharged. We then talked about the accident. The daughter did not remember much of the events of that day or the months following. I noticed how the daughter occasionally spoke slowly or used a word out of context. She would catch herself after a minute or her mother would help her find the right word. She apologized when this happened but I reassured her that an apology was not necessary.

We went over their finances. The mother and daughter both received some benefits and the daughter received a small amount in child support. Even living very frugally I could see they would have a hard time paying for anything extra like car repairs or ever saving enough for a handicap accessible van. I asked if I could look around the house and both the mother and daughter gave me their approval. I looked in nearly empty cabinets and a refrigerator with condiments but not much real food. I noticed the laundry was overflowing in the hamper and the mother looked embarrassed. She told me the washing machine had been broken for over a week and the landlord had told them he would get to it when he could. This made me upset as I knew how hard it would be for them to get to a Laundromat and it would be an added expense. The mother said she did not want to “rock the boat” because the landlord had already been understanding over late rent and had even given them a rent reduction in the past when the daughter had first moved in. After reviewing the rent I could see they were paying a very reasonable rent and told the mother I would send my appliance repair man over to take a look.

After a thorough review I showed the mother and daughter a picture of a handicap van “We together” had recently purchased. It was a smaller van and I had been waiting for the right

person to give this van to. The daughter's petite size and small chair would fit in this van perfectly. The mother looked at the van and said, "Oh my, that would be perfect." When I told them both that "We" were going to give them the van, they began to cry. The mother hugged the daughter in her chair and they cried together. The mother said, "This will change our life so much. My daughter will be able to participate in so much more. She won't have to stay home alone when we go places." The daughter said, "And you won't have to try to lift me all the time."

We went over the utilities and I promised them assistance with them as well. This lifted the heavy financial burden and stress from their shoulders. I was preparing to leave when the mother said, "We need to all pray a prayer of thanksgiving for The Time is Now to Help and the blessings they have brought to our family." She called the grandchild in and I watched as she bowed their head in prayer. We said a wonderful prayer together that reminded me that no matter where we are in life, no matter how hard our struggles, we should always have a thankful heart. Here was a family that had endured many tough times in their lives yet they were grateful for every day. They were grateful for the life they had. They were grateful for all of "You" and the blessings you provided for their family. We held hands as we said together, "Amen."

The next few days were busy with getting the van mechanically ready and the washing machine was repaired. There also were a few household repairs I noticed that my handyman fixed for free. The utilities were brought up to date. Food was delivered. More prayers of thanksgiving were said for all of "You" making our continued mission of help possible.

We promise to continue our good works, our mission of caring and sharing, removing the pains of poverty for as many as donations allow in our communities. Your support has been crucial in our success at changing lives forever. We are so grateful to call you not only donors but friends in our mission The Time Is Now to Help. God Bless all of you.

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 Family Foundation, I.Am.Giving Foundation, Geneva Wells Motel, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Petco Foundation, Royal Neighbors of America, DC Mitigation, Elkhorn Chemical & Packaging, Rita's Wells Street Salon, Deborah & Michael Halverson, Albert & Ellen Burnell, Petra & Mark Zinniker, David Altwies, Carolyn May Essel, Becky Feffer, Victor Stasica, Karin Collamore, Margaret Guidarelli, Gregory Swanson, Dean Hoefert, Peter Seibert, William Davit, Alex Dahlstrom, Edward Paredes, Margaret Plevak, Erich & Diane Lademann, John & Sally Dicmas, Michael Glass, Brenda

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Memorials: The following donations were given in memory of Mrs. Maureen Shaughnessy: Cushman & Wakefield V&A: Donna Stritch, John Mackris, Mark Krause, Tom Helm, Bryan Younge & Gil Licudine. Adams Electric in memory of Charles Roan, III. Bob Nordhaus & Marcie Hollman and Stephen Freedman & Cynthia Guy in memory of Landon Petrie, Sr. Carolyn & Ron Bloch in memory of Don Conoboy.

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