

## **A Week in The Time Is Now to Help**

Our weeks always seem to go by in a busy blur of organizing, coordinating, counseling and all the many activities that it takes to run a charity. We are a small group of determined hard-working people. There are many people that have asked, "How do you run a nonprofit?" or "How can I start my own charity?" In this week's column I will share with you our past week so you can get an idea of the amount of time, dedication and commitment it takes to remove the pain and suffering of poverty for our fellow creations through our mission The Time is Now to Help.

Sunday: Many people have questioned us on our hours of operation. The simple answer is we do not have any. At least not a formal set of hours. We tend to work seven days a week, as many hours as needed to get everything done. Most times our personal lives do take a back seat to the needs of the poverty stricken. I'm not saying this to try and elicit sympathy. It just is the truth and probably true for many people that have a dedication to their life's calling.

Several emergency calls were placed to secure housing. Background checks were conducted on two people that had been referred to us by other groups. Letters that had been previously researched were arranged for visitation, deciding which would be unplanned visits and if any would be arranged ahead or rechecks. Sal listened to over thirty voice mails, two days worth of messages, returning calls where necessary. We do not have a paid office staff to answer our phone full-time so our phone system always goes to voice mail. If we used our time or funds to answer the phone none of our other activities would be possible.

Sal dictated the upcoming week's column, using his notes as a reference. Most columns are based on an assistance given three months or more in the past. This helps to preserve their anonymity. The details can be forgotten due to the volume of people we give our assistance to each week. Just this past week eleven of our fellow creations were provided assistance. A volunteer types and edits the column, adding any memorials and special thanks to the column. The newspaper deadline is Monday afternoon.

Monday: The mail is sorted by a volunteer. Names are checked for previous assistance given. Situations are reviewed and sorted by level of need. The weekend's donations are entered in the books and deposited.

Sal arranged for two cars to receive service. He also spoke to a potential car donor about the donation process. The car is already spoken for by a single mother with a child that has a life threatening disability. It will make a huge difference in her life to have reliable transportation to get to and from the hospital and medical appointments. The mother shares with Sal several scary incidences of breaking down on I-43 at 9 p.m. on the way home from Children's Hospital. The mother is in tears when she hears it is her turn to get the next donated vehicle. The donated car will be assessed for mechanical issues and the tires will be checked. All repairs will be completed before the mother registers the vehicle in her name. That too is arranged.

Sal visits a senior citizen with health problems and financial insecurity. He arranges for rent to be paid, food delivered and utilities to be paid. His next stop is to visit a family that has been residing in a motel while looking for work and affordable housing. They are happy to report the father has finally gotten a job and they have found an apartment they can afford. Once this is all verified we will provide the first month's rent and security deposit. These are a huge hurdle for many of our poverty stricken neighbors. Once you are evicted it is not only hard to find a rental that will accept your bad credit but living in a motel makes it impossible to ever save for your security deposit. Sal makes a call to the potential landlord to verify the rent and provide a much needed reassurance to the landlord. The family is overjoyed to finally be moving out of the motel they have spent the last three weeks in. Seeing how hard this is on a family with young children we are overjoyed for them as well.

Tuesday: A senior citizen with pending utility disconnection is visited. A mother with a child with severe disabilities is provided assistance with the rental of a home that provides wheelchair access. She would not have been able to make this move without our assistance. The landlord agreed to a rent reduction and we paid her first two months rent. More mail was sorted. More phone calls were made.

Wednesday: Sal again tackles the voice mail to find over twenty-five phone calls this time. Many people will call several times in a row due to their desperation. This does not speed up the process of assistance, only slows us down as we try to distinguish between the truly desperate calls, the important questions and the nuisance calls. All phone calls are matched with letters of request for help as this is a requirement. Sal returns several phone calls from potential donors asking questions about our mission. We are always happy to share the good works "We" all do together.

A phone consultation with our tax attorney/accountant, who so generously donates his time, every year since our beginning in 1989, shares some information about our recently audited financials and our annual reports. You may find it reassuring to know our financials are audited every year by an outside firm. It is a month long process each year that requires good record keeping and orderly files. We have never failed an audit or even shown reason for concern. It is something we are very proud of. Every dollar donated goes to help the poverty stricken.

Thursday: A single mother living in a shelter is referred by a church group. We are often referred by other organizations when they do not have the resources to help. Our donations are again running behind the many requests we have received this week, in addition to the three referrals and the people already on our waiting list. This is how we operate most weeks and have found that often God does provide. Our daily mail reveals just enough in donations to help this single mother and two children find safe housing. Unfortunately this bumps someone further down the waiting list as emergencies are helped first. We answer not only in the order received but more often in the level of need. If you are a homeless senior citizen you will be put ahead of a family that is behind in their rent or utility payment. Another suggestion to people that write us letters referring someone in need, please, please provide a name, address and if possible a phone number for whom you are referring, if at all possible.

When we receive a letter that asks us to help your neighbor we do not know which neighbor you are referring too. If we have to spend extra time investigating which of your neighbors is the one in need it is taking away time spent helping one of our fellow creations. Just this past week we received four referrals with no name or additional information. We really would love to help.

Friday: While some people are planning for their weekend of fun, we find ourselves preparing for a weekend of service. This is our enjoyment. This is what we like to do. There is nothing better than seeing the smiles on children's faces when they receive a bed, food or new shoes. The amount of happy tears shed by parents and grandparents that were previously financially stressed, often on top of major health concerns, is how we measure our success. In this column we try to share with "You" the feeling of the hugs of gratitude and overwhelmed relief our fellow creations share with Sal and our volunteers every day.

Thank you notes are being written on a regular basis. Many donations include instructions for birthday notifications, anniversaries and other honorary gifts. These are written to include all the proper notes. Memorial donations are remembered and provided thank you notes to all donors.

Grants are applied for on a regular basis as well. Sal also speaks at many church groups, recreational groups, schools and other organizations. This particular day Sal attended an art exhibit featuring a local artist, Pam Ring. Pam donated over 200 beautiful Christmas ornaments that she handmade to be given to the children in need that visit the W.C. Food Pantry each December. She has done this for the last three years. Sal keeps aside a handful of the ornaments for his home visits in December. The children always love these beautiful ornaments. Several of the art exhibit attendees graciously hand donations to Sal before he leaves. After attending the art exhibit and speaking to the crowd, Sal makes a visit on his way home, providing much needed utility assistance and arranging a food delivery for an elderly widow.

Saturday: The voice mail again is full of calls pleading for assistance. The post office box is again stuffed with requests, but thank God there are envelopes also containing your caring and sharing donations. In addition, your positive notes, cards and comments that renew all of us and allow us to continue our good works together. These will help us get through another week of balancing the requests of many in desperate need of our assistance. When we feel overwhelmed by the desire to help with the limitations of our own budget we often turn to God for the calming presence that only God's spirit can bring. It is very hard to see the needs of so many and not be affected. Seeing our fellow creations with such desperate need of the daily necessities of life often brings us to tears. When we see first hand all those that are struggling in desperate need for their daily survival, we all become emotionally drained. It is only through prayers and your support that allow us to be strong each day. We wake up renewed and ready to answer the plea for help. The Time truly is Now to Help.

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*

**Upcoming Event:** Lake Geneva Country Meats will be hosting a Holiday Wine Tasting on Saturday, November 22, 2014 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. LGCM will be donating \$7.50 from each ticket sold to The Time is Now to Help. There will be 50 fine wines from around the world and light food to sample. Please join us for what is sure to be a great evening. Please visit [www.lakegenevacountrymeats.com](http://www.lakegenevacountrymeats.com) for more information and to purchase tickets. While you are at their website be sure to vote in their Pardon the Turkey Support a Local Charity event. We would love your vote!!

**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, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Petco Foundation, Terry Dignan, Saints Simeon & Anna Anglican Church, Rita's Wells Street Salon, Bradley Solheim, Raymond & Pamela Ring, Amazon Smile Foundation, Alliant Energy Foundation, Arlene Torrenga, Sid & Patty Johnson, William Davit, J.T. Marty, Dan Devries, Carolyn Alder, Rita Roberts, William Burris, Alex Dahlstrom, Karin Collamore, Margaret Guidarelli, GoodSearch, Lauren Grady, Rosemarie Reiherzer, Donald & Mildred Carl, Gerald & Marilyn Wilkin, Joanne Batzler, Beth & Jody Rendall, John & Nancy Dvorak, Walter & Florence Strumpf, Bruce & Nancy Johnson, 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 & Mary Ann Zelenski in honor of Ken & Marie Koenen's 50th Wedding Anniversary.

**Memorials:** Sal & Corinne Dimiceli, Sr. in memory of Clarence Schawk. Carla Matz in memory of Harry Bublitz and Heidi Danner. Robert & Mary Ann Zelenski in memory of Herb Koenen and Randy Bieneman.

**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](http://www.timeisnowtohelp.org)