

Dear W.C.,

I am a senior citizen and occasional donor. I read your article each week in the newspaper. I worked hard my whole life and was able to retire ten years ago at age 70. I have a home health care worker and a house keeper comes in several times a week to check on me and keep things tidy. The reason I am writing is I am worried about my housekeeper. She has worked for me for about three years now and we have gotten to be friends. She often brings me treats or shows me pictures of her kids. Recently I noticed she was looking more and more gaunt. When I asked her if everything was alright she told me her husband had left the country and deserted her and their three children. I know this has to be hard for them as she does not make much cleaning. She is a kind, good woman and I feel so bad for her. She has had to miss cleaning on several occasions due to car trouble. Now she told me she is going to be evicted so she does not know when she will be able to come back to work. Can you please check on this family? I would not ask if I did not think they were a deserving family.

Dear Readers,

I called the letter writer to verify some of the information and obtain a few more details. The senior woman was overjoyed to hear it was The Time Is Now to Help calling to check in on her housekeeper and friend. We spoke on the phone for quite some time and the senior woman shared many more details with me about her housekeeper. She told me how the woman and children would sometimes just stop by to check on her, even when she was not cleaning or being paid for her services. On holidays the woman always made sure she had a home cooked meal and a visit from the children. The senior woman also shared some of the times her cleaning woman had struggled due to her husband's drinking. She said, "There were days I could see she was hurting. I have seen her cry when she didn't think I was looking. I have had to pry out of her what I know about her relationship with her awful husband. From what I've observed he was a terrible husband and father." From our conversation I could tell this woman not only desperately needed our help, she also was very worthy. The senior woman provided me the woman and children's address and phone number so I could check on them myself. The senior woman said she would call and tell the woman I was coming to visit so she would answer the door. She was afraid the woman would not answer the door thinking I was there to evict them.

I went to the address provided and found an old duplex. The place was pretty run down. When I approached the front door I noticed the front drape pulled aside and closed again quickly. I heard children scurrying and whispering. Once I knocked it became silent as if no one was home. I knocked a second time and announced who I was loud enough to be heard through the closed door. After a moment the woman I assumed to be the mother of the children answered the door. I smiled when I saw two children peering from behind her. The mother said, "Are you the person my friend told me would come? I'm sorry we thought you were here to evict us. We have been afraid of everyone coming to our door." I showed the woman my identification and gave her a brief explanation of The Time Is Now to Help and how we were indeed there to help.

The mother invited me inside their duplex. Considering they only had a few minutes notice from the senior woman calling to tell them I was on my way, the duplex looked orderly. The mother introduced me to the three children. The two youngest shyly continued to hide behind their mother. The oldest child said hello and watched me curiously. I spoke with all of them together for a few minutes and then the mother sent them to their rooms to play. The mother said to me, "I had never heard of The Time Is Now to Help until my friend showed me your column in the newspaper. I never heard of someone helping people like you do." I explained to her how The Time Is Now to Help worked and how all of us come together to provide assistance. Once she seemed comfortable with my questions I asked the mother to collect her bills, late notices, check book and budget if she had one. I watched as she gathered all these items.

I questioned her financial and personal situation with her husband. The mother immediately had tears in her eyes when I asked about her wayward husband but I needed to know all the details to provide the proper assistance. The mother explained how her husband had family out of the country and most likely a girlfriend. He had not been a good father to the children and often spent all his money drinking. He took what little they had left for rent and utilities and used it to leave the country. The mother began to sob saying, "What am I going to do? How am I going to care for these children? How could he do this to us?" I knew the mother must now be strong and ready to face her challenges and I told her this. I handed her some tissues and told her to not waste her tears on a man that shirks his duties as father and husband. The mother looked at me then as she wiped her eyes dry and said, "These tears are not for him. I will not waste any more tears on his empty heart. I am crying for my children that will suffer because of this." I assured the mother "We" would be there to make sure the children and she did not suffer.

The first step was to figure out how this mother and children could survive on their own going forward. The mother could not work full-time due to not having childcare. She would need to work as many hours as she could while the children were in school. She also would have to apply for rent and utility assistance and Foodshare. She would need our help to get through the next few months. Her rent was too high for her rental and her budget. I told her we would need to look into finding a smaller rental with lower rent. The mother said, "My husband insisted we rent this duplex. When I told him we would have a hard time paying the high rent he didn't care and rented it anyway. Our landlord was one of his drinking buddies and now he is mad my husband left without paying the rent. He is taking that out on me by calling and showing up all the time asking for his rent and threatening eviction. I tried to explain to him I do not know where my husband is but he thinks I'm covering up for him." I told the mother I would call the landlord and explain her situation. She gave me the phone number and I called immediately. Once the landlord heard it was The Time Is Now to Help calling in her behalf he immediately apologized for his actions, explaining how this situation has happened to him several times in the past few years making him skeptical of these excuses. I assured him this was a very real situation where the mother and children were left helpless and penniless by the husband. The landlord immediately said he would not evict her. The landlord even suggested a more reasonable smaller rental he had that would be available in three weeks. After speaking for a few more minutes he agreed to forgive the back rent. I thanked him profusely for his caring heart for this mother and children.

Once the rent and utilities were discussed the mother and I talked about her car. The mother admitted she missed many of her cleaning jobs in the past six weeks due to her car breaking down. Since her husband had taken all their funds she did not have the money to repair it. Repairs were scheduled to provide her with reliable safe transportation. I also asked about their food security. The mother admitted they had been eating mostly rice and beans and canned foods. I asked if she had been to the food pantry and she said she had not due to her car problems. Once her car was repaired she would be able to make the monthly trip to the food pantry to help with their food insecurity. Until then we provided grocery gift cards to be sure the children and mother had fresh healthy foods and toiletries.

I handed the mother a sheet of paper outlining all the areas we would be assisting with. She read through these and began to cry again. I again reminded her she must be strong for the children. She shook her head, saying, "I am crying because this help will not only keep me strong for my children it will also probably save them. Where would we have been without The Time Is Now to Help? Living in our old car in the cold with no food? These are happy tears, tears of joy because there are good people that care."

After our assistance the mother was able to move into the smaller rental. She was able to take on more cleaning jobs while the children were in school. Now that she had a reliable car she could take on the extra work load knowing she would arrive safe and punctual. She is still waiting for her determination for assistance but with minimal help from all of "Us" in the past few months she is working hard to be independent. She knows her children are counting on her and she is determined to show them one of their parents is dependable. She can do this because of all of your generous donations. Thank "You" for making this possible.

This mother and children are four of the hundreds helped each year thanks to "You". The new Family Foundation \$30,000 Matching Grant opportunity is the perfect way for us to continue our goal of helping even more people in 2016. Please consider a donation at this time knowing it will be matched dollar for dollar, doubling your donation. The lives changed are all due to "You". Thank you and God Bless "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.

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Memorials: Jody, Craig Jr. and Cara in loving memory of Craig Cook, Sr. Donna Vieth in memory of Pat Warren. Alan & Marilyn Kaddatz in memory of Gail Thoreson.

Honoraries: Paul Ziegler in honor of Richard Torhorst. Allied Supply Employees in honor of Thomas Getzen. Melody Fehling, Jim Gage, Sue Williams and Steve Watters in honor of Randy Thelen's Birthday.

Prayer Chain: There have been numerous requests for a prayer chain addition to our weekly column. Please pray for healing for the following people: Caroline, Clarence, Ryan, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynesha, Brandi's Grandma.

W.C. Food Pantry: The W.C. Food Pantry is located at: 205 E. Commerce St., Elkhorn, WI. 53121. This is in the old Aurora Clinic building off of Hwy. 67 just east of Interstate 43. Their phone number is (262) 723-4488.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org