

Dear W.C.,

I am writing to see if you can help my mother. I am leaving for college next fall and do not want to leave her living the way she is. She is struggling to get out of an abusive marriage to my step-father and move on with her life. He left her over a month ago in debt and without a car. She needs to get a job but does not have a car to get there. She does not have any job experience for the past ten years. My step-father has been very controlling since they were married ten years ago. He forced her to quit her job and sold her car. She is completely reliant on him to pay all the bills and for all her transportation needs. He never gave her enough money to buy food for my two younger half-siblings. He went out to bars and could afford to smoke but never seemed to have enough money for food, the dentist for my mom and my brothers or gas for the car to drive her where she needs to go. A month ago he said he was moving out with his new girlfriend and would no longer pay the bills. She found out the rent was overdue and the utilities had not been paid. I work part-time as I am still in high school so my pay is not enough to pay these bills. I know my step-father does not love my mother and does not seem to care about his own children, my two younger brothers. My mother has been very unhappy for a long time. The constant abuse and controlling from my step-father has taken a toll on her mentally and physically. She has not spoken to her family or any friends in years. Is there anyway your organization could help her get out of this horrible situation?

Worried Daughter

Dear Readers,

Over the years we have seen and written about many forms of abuse. All have a traumatizing effect on those that suffer from it. Many do not realize that those that witness the abuse not only feel helpless to make it stop but also are traumatized by what they see and experience. When I speak to the young people that live in these situations I see the confusion and pain they live in. They often are made to keep the secret and carry misplaced guilt and shame. I knew this young letter writer, her mother and siblings needed to get out of that abusive situation and shown what it is like to live without the constant threats of violence.

I called the young lady that wrote the letter requesting our assistance. I told her I would need to meet with the mother and her together. The daughter told me I could come to their rental house as the step-father had not been there for over a month. I agreed to meet them at their rental.

A few hours later I was knocking on the door of a small home. In a moment it was opened by who I assumed was the mother and daughter. They resembled each other but the mother looked much older in both her features and demeanor. While the daughter looked me in the eye and put out her hand to shake the mother looked to the floor and had a slouched posture. She kept her arms wrapped around her thin body as if trying to protect herself. I've seen this posture and demeanor before. She was a person that was used to being berated and abused.

I noticed the mother looking around fearfully outside when the daughter invited me inside. I could tell she was looking to see if she was being watched. The daughter noticed too and said to the mother, “Mom, don’t worry he is not here and he is not going to hurt you any longer. W.C. is here to help us.”

The home was very clean with not one thing out of place. When I commented on this the daughter said, “That is how my step-father expected it. If it was not spotless whenever he walked in the door he would drag my Mom around the house by her hair, swearing at her and calling her horrible words. Even though she knows he left her she is still afraid he will come home and not find the house clean.” The mother began to cry as she heard the truth spoken by the daughter. When I asked the mother if this was true, she lowered her head and whispered, “Yes.” I asked if she ever filed a police report against her husband and she said she had not. I advised her to file a restraining order immediately, but knew it would not do a lot of good if she did not even know where her abusive husband was. The daughter commented, “He was very careful to never leave a mark that could be used against him. Most of his abuse was psychological and verbal. He would pull her hair or twist her arm. He even hid most of his physical abuse from me until the past year. For years I’ve seen him criticize and throw things but this past year he couldn’t hide his violence from me any longer.”

I asked the women about their life with the abusive man. I asked if he had abused the children. The women shared many dark times with me. They both stated he was verbally abusive with the children and had nearly injured them with his punishments in the past but had always known when to stop in order to not leave a mark that would show. They all were clearly terrified of this man and what he threatened to do. I know of many people that have lived in homes like this for years until one day the abusive person goes too far. How could we stand by and wait for this abuse to start again or become worse? We had to get them all out from under his control. Even though he was no longer living in the home he was still controlling them by making them suffer financially. We were there to break that cycle of abuse.

I asked to look around the home. The mother showed me the shared bedroom for the two young boys that were at school at the time of my visit. The room was spotless like the rest of the house. When I got to the kitchen there was very little food other than canned and dry goods. The refrigerator had very little in the way of fresh foods. When I asked about their food insecurity the mother told me her husband had controlled all their finances and only gave her cash to shop with. Since he had not given her any cash for four weeks they were out of fresh foods and lucky to still have a few canned items. The mother then showed me the bills that had been arriving for the past few weeks and they all showed overdue balances. The husband had not been paying the bills for several months. When I asked the mother about this she again looked away before speaking, “He never let me see the check book. I do not even know how much money he earned. Then last month he told me he had a girlfriend and did not want to take care of his family any more. He just left and I haven’t heard from him since. To be honest I am immensely relieved he is gone but now we have no money to pay our bills or to buy food. My daughter has been buying food with what she earns. It is not much but it helps. We are about to be evicted and our utilities are going to be disconnected. I

called his job even though he told me I was never allowed to do that. I found out he quit weeks ago. Knowing him he probably has left town.”

I was actually relieved to hear he had not been heard from but still very aware of the financial predicament of this woman and children. I looked through the bills and at the faces of the two women and could not help but feel anger towards this man. How could he make their lives so miserable for so long? What kind of person does this? I wish I had the answer and that this was an isolated incident, but sadly it is not.

I pulled out my phone and began to make a few calls to volunteers and to several landlords. I knew we needed to move this family to a location the father was not aware of as he could return any time and again inflict his abuse. One of the landlords had a rental that would be available in a few days and was willing to take in the mother and children for now. Another volunteer offered to pick up some food and deliver it as the mother did not have any transportation. The daughter told me she was dropped off at her job after school by the school bus and often times walked home several miles in the dark or if lucky got a ride home from a co-worker. The mother and children would need a car. But what I know the mother needed most would be a job. She would need to be able to support herself and her children until the abusive father could be found and made to pay child support.

After speaking with the mother for a while she began to regain some of her confidence. I noticed she no longer stared at her lap when she spoke and answered questions for herself. I asked about her life before she married this man ten years ago. She shared she had been employed and had family and friends. She had been a single mother supporting herself and her young daughter. Then she said she thought she met the man of her dreams. He had been charming and wanted to take care of her. He had been wonderful to her daughter. After only knowing him for a few months she agreed to marry him. Right after they were married the controlling had started. Her husband had been crafty in his ways of alienating everyone. Everyone had finally stopped coming by or sending invitations as no one could stand to see how this man treated his wife and everyone else. I told the mother it was time for her to let these people know she was no longer with this man and would like to renew her family bonds. The mother again cried as she told me how her sister had begged and pleaded with her to leave him years ago when she had witnessed the man berate the woman many times. The sister had told her she could not watch this man treat her like that and they had not spoken in years. The mother told me she would be calling her sister tonight. That was the first time I saw both the mother and daughter smile since I had walked in the door.

We discussed the mother's job skills and where she would like to look for a job. I gave her some advice and the daughter offered to help her make a resume. I asked if she still had a valid driver's license and she confirmed she did. I knew she would need a reliable car in order to make the necessary changes in her life. I would work on that once I finished my visit and evaluation.

Within a week the mother and children were moved into their new apartment. It was on the third floor with a secure access that gave her some feeling of protection. I knew the landlord and he gave her first month's rent and did not require a security deposit. A car was purchased

to help with her job search. Several weeks later the mother was proud to begin her first job in over ten years. The resume the daughter had helped her prepare highlighted job skills she forgot she even possessed, boosting her confidence. The daughter also helped her pick out new clothes for work with the gift cards we provided, as her abusive husband had not allowed her to buy clothing for years. The abusive husband was finally located a few months later as he was arrested for an OWI. He would be held accountable by the state going forward to pay his responsibility to his children. He was also served a restraining order that so far he has honored. It also seems his girlfriend had filed one as well as battery charges against the man for abuse she sustained at his hands. Thank God "We" were all there to help this mother and children break their cycle of abuse. They have moved on, renewed family relationships and friendships, and are living life happy without the heavy burden of secrets and abuse. Several months later I received a thank you letter with a copy of an achievement award from her job. This mother was very proud of her accomplishment and thankful to all of "Us" for what we have done to restore her family's life, pride and happiness. Thank you to all of "You" for allowing us to bring this life saving assistance.

Please let us continue to help our fellow creations. Every dollar you donate will be matched by the Fox Charities Miracles \$25,000 Matching Grant. Together we will continue to remove the pain and suffering of our fellow Americans.

The Time is Now to Help has been chosen by the Lake Geneva Restaurant Week selection committee to participate in the 2016 Charity Check program - where the most voted non-profit will be the recipient of \$5,000 sponsored by Lake Geneva Country Meats. The 2016 Lake Geneva Restaurant Week event will take place June 3rd – June 12th, 2016. To learn more about this event please visit www.LakeGenevaRestaurantWeek.com. Be sure to start planning to attend this year's event and vote for The Time Is Now to Help to be the charity that receives the \$5,000 Charity Check.

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: Family Foundation, Paul Ziegler, Fox Charities, The Rhoades Foundation, Martin Business, The Dan & Donna Casey Family Charitable Fund, Badger High School FFA Coin Drive, Jeanne Allen, Michael & Sally Anne Chier, William Antti, Joan Murphy, Darien United Methodist Church, Barbara Chapman, Sid & Patty Johnson, Donald & Marilyn Ketchpaw, Jacob & Janice Friesema, Carolyn May Essel, Nancy Yaeger, Elaine Goode, Joel & Annette Hovestol, Carol Hinnens, Michael & Deborah Halverson, Lorna Klein, Raymond & Kimberly Sommer, Yvonne Mol, Marilyn Carver, Ernest & Dorothy Winters, Veronica Kirkpatrick, Robert Ribordy, Charles & Patricia Wehrmann, Marilyn Carver, Al & Geri Hinton, Gerald & Marilyn Wilkin, Emily De Baere, Barbara Kufalk, George & Loretta Clettenberg, our anonymous donors and 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.

Memorials: Arlene Clausen in memory of Keith Watson.

Prayer Chain: Please pray for healing for the following people: Caroline, Susan, Clarence, Ryan, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynesha, Brandi's Grandma, Corinne and Marilyn.

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.

Inspiration Ministries Resale Shop: Please donate your gently used household items and furniture to the Inspiration Ministries Resale Shop. For local pick up of major items or collection appointments please call (262) 275-2264. Inspiration Ministries Resale Shop is located at N2270 State Rd. 67, Walworth, WI 53184. The Resale Shop is open Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please visit often knowing your support will provide life changing assistance for the fellow creations in their care. For more information visit

www.inspirationministries.org.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org