

Dear W.C.,

My best friend is going through a very difficult time. She is seven months pregnant and recently lost her husband to cancer. He was only in his late forties. She has a teenage child living at home still. They are really struggling financially due to the many bills they were not able to pay during his illness and the loss of income when her husband had to shut down his own business. She worked fulltime running their business together so she is no longer employed either. Now she is not only going through the terrible loss of her husband, she just can't seem to get back on her feet financially. I know they have been selling off their furniture and her husband's car was repossessed. Last time I stopped by her gas stove wouldn't work and she claimed it was broke, but I suspect her utilities were disconnected. I had brought over a meal and wanted to warm it up for them because I had noticed they did not have much food in the house. She has no income now as she has applied for assistance but she told me she was denied. She has tried to find a job but no one wants to hire a woman that is so far along in her pregnancy. I told her I would write you a letter in her behalf and that The Time Is Now to Help would probably be her only hope. Thank you.

Dear Readers,

It is never easy to comfort the grief stricken. There are no words we can say that will take away the painful loss of a loved one. What we can offer is our compassion and ease the pains of poverty where needed. When I was on my way to pay a visit to this woman and older child I knew this would be one of those visits where I shared in the pain and raw emotions of grief.

I arrived at the address given to me by the caring friend that wrote the letter sharing the struggle of this woman and child. There was an older car in the driveway but I saw no other evidence of any one being at home. The shades were drawn and the home looked deserted. I knocked on the front door and waited for it to be answered. I knocked several more times before finally seeing a shade open a crack. I waited and the door was finally opened by a very pregnant woman that I couldn't help but notice had red rimmed swollen eyes. She stood at the door clutching a handful of tissues and asked, "Can I help you?" I answered, "Didn't your friend tell you I was coming to visit? I am Sal from The Time Is Now to Help." The woman looked confused but then said, "I thought you were coming next week. I'm sorry I must have gotten the dates mixed up. Please come in."

She opened the door and I walked into the dark nearly empty home. The home seemed to be in good shape and tidy but there was no furniture except for one recliner chair and a small table and two chairs in the eat in kitchen. The woman looked embarrassed as she explained she had sold everything she could to make their mortgage payments the past two months. She said, "I have nothing of any value left to sell. I don't know how we will be able to make next month's payment." I told her "We" were there to help her sort out their financial distress and find a way she and her child could get by on their own going forward. I asked where her child was and she answered, "My son is at work. He buses tables at a restaurant. The best part He is trying to help as much as he can. She invited me to sit at the small table as she collected all the bills and statements I had requested. I asked instead if she minded if I had a

look around her kitchen. She looked a little embarrassed but told me to go ahead, adding, “You won’t find much there though. We have been eating very simply lately.”

Eating simply is one thing but living on breakfast cereal and peanut butter sandwiches, like I did as a child when my own family lived in poverty, is another thing completely. It is a common thing I find when people are living in poverty. It is especially hard to see the lack of nutrition for our senior citizens, children and, in this instance, pregnant women. It can make a huge difference in their health and the health of the unborn child. I asked the woman what she had eaten over the past few days and she looked away with shame. I knew she was trying to cover up her food insecurity. I asked the woman what her favorite thing to eat was and she said, “I have craved steak my whole pregnancy but I have not had one for months.” I made a call to a volunteer and asked them to pick up a steak dinner with all the sides for this woman and her son. She listened as I gave the volunteer the address to deliver these hot meals. The woman tried to decline this meal delivery but when I told her the baby and her older son needed food she nodded her head in agreement.

As we waited for the food to be delivered I asked the woman some questions about her husband and his illness. I could see the grief and pain of loss was still sharp as her already red swollen eyes began to cry. I knew it was not the first time that day she was crying nor would it probably be the last. I asked if she was okay talking about this and she said, “I think I need to talk about him to you. I don’t know why but I feel like I can talk to you about anything.” I have heard this many times over the years and I do try to listen and help people move on from whatever is holding them back from living their best life. Whether it be their health, loss, grief, the pains of poverty, I want them to be able to be better off in their lives when we are done with our assistance.

The woman started from the beginning when she and her husband were married fifteen years ago. She shared their joy at the birth of their son one year after they were married, but then their sadness when she had suffered many miscarriages over the years. They had not been able to have any other children until she was surprised seven months prior with the news that she was indeed pregnant. She told me how her husband had just begun his treatments for cancer and how she had been so tired and nauseated but had blamed it on stress. She had no idea she was pregnant until a month later. The woman was sobbing as she said, “How could this happen now? After all those years of trying to have another child we were shocked. My husband was devastated that he would never get to know this child I am carrying. He wanted to live until I gave birth but that was not to be. His cancer was too advanced by the time we found out. He only lived three more months.” I gave the woman a few minutes to ease her crying before we continued.

The woman told me how her husband was only 48 so he neglected going to the doctor with his symptoms until it was too late and the cancer had spread. He always said he was too busy running their home remodel business to see the doctor. Once he was diagnosed he had to shut down his business and they had no income. She said they quickly went through their small savings while he was alive. She used the remaining money to pay for his funeral. She showed me the statements to support all these things.

I went over all the bills and the mortgage on the home. The payments were much too high for her to manage on her own. The home would probably sell quickly if she put it on the market immediately. There would not be any money to be made on the sale of the home as they had bought it in a more inflated housing market but she would be able to get out from under the monthly payments, insurance and taxes. She had managed to neglect paying everything else in favor of keeping up with the home payments. I asked the woman about her plans for employment after the birth of her child. She showed me her resume she had made and it listed her many job skills. With her knowledge she would be an asset to many office settings. I told her I would share her resume with several people I knew would appreciate her skills and possibly offer a job in the near future. The woman said she would be willing to go in and interview now and even begin any training but knew her time was very limited before she would need maternity leave. I was glad to see she was eager to go to work and begin supporting her family. I suggested some additional areas of assistance she should apply for and also gave her information for the food pantry hours of operation and clothing distribution centers.

After reviewing her present needs I knew she would need utility assistance as her gas was indeed disconnected and her electric would be disconnected shortly. We paid her mortgage for the following month to allow her time to sell her home and not be stressed over a possible foreclosure. We had several car repairs done on her older car to ensure she and her children had safe transportation. We also provided gas and grocery gift cards to ensure they would not become food insecure once again. As I reviewed these areas of assistance we heard a knock on the door and one of our caring volunteers delivered a bag containing her longed for steak dinners. After introducing the volunteer so she would know them for any future assistance they may provide the volunteer left us so the woman could eat.

I watched as the woman ate hungrily and savored every bite of her first full meal in weeks. She was so grateful we had also brought an extra meal for her son who would be returning home from work soon. As she ate I finished going over with her the many changes that would need to be done to keep them safely out of poverty in the future. We made lists and plans and the woman finally said, "This is the first time I have had any hope for our future in months. I did not know how we were going to move on without my husband here. You have shown me that not only can I do this, I have to do this. I know my husband will be looking down on us and I hope I can make him proud of the mother I will be to this new baby and our older son." This time through her tears I also saw a slight smile and even a glimmer of hope. That is what The Time Is Now to Help gives to our fellow creations suffering in poverty, a glimmer of hope for their future.

After only six weeks the woman was able to sell her home and move out. She had her few boxes of household necessities and clothing packed weeks before. The son was very helpful in the move and made sure his mother did not do any heavy lifting. The mother and son found a two bedroom apartment they could safely afford thanks to the very small amount of money made on the sale of her home. This would hold them over until the mother began her new job eight weeks after the birth of the baby. We provided some gently used furniture to help furnish their apartment and even a crib for the new little one that was due any day. When I stopped by to check on the woman and her son I found them both in the process of

putting together the crib. The woman tearfully thanked us for all “We” had done to help them. She looked wistfully at the crib and said, “I can’t believe this new little one will be here any day. All these years of longing for another baby and God chooses to give us one now. Maybe he knew this would be what I would need to help me continue to live after my husband died. This baby and my son will force me to smile and to even enjoy living again.” Both she and her son gave me a hug and again thanked us for all we had done to save them from what would have most certainly been a quick downward spiral further into poverty. Your support prevented that from happening now and in their future.

My Dear Friends, together we continue to remove the pain and suffering of poverty for our good fellow creations that need and deserve our help. I cannot do this alone. It takes all of us together. Every penny you give is used to help the poverty stricken. Thank you, thank you for your support in helping our fellow Americans in desperate need. God Bless “You” for your compassion and Caring and Sharing for God’s creations.

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: Kunes Country Auto Group, Gregg Kunes, The Harold & Bernice DeWeerd Family Foundation, Martin Business, Elkcast Aluminum, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Alan Cornue, Yvonne Mol, George & Lauretta Clettenberg, Robert & Patricia Davis, Marilyn Carver, Dolores Rich, Dan & Regina Mehring, Phyllis Heinrich, Bonnie Cowans, Milt & Carol Ann Ancevic, Gregory Swanson, E. & Barbara Andres, Mike & Kim Olsen, William Davit, Duane DeYoung, Richard Coser, Karin Collamore, Elizabeth Layhew-Kyle, Rhonda Lee Desautels, R. Nicklaus & A. Berton-Nicklaus, 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: Al & Geri Hinton in memory of Frances Lundvall. Richard & Elizabeth Czaja in memory of Corkey Sherman. Ronald & Patricia Sarna in memory of Dr. Carol Hyde Basso. The following donations were given in loving memory of Dorothy "Dotsy" Heffernan: John & Betsy Andrews, Steven & Lola Saunders, Frank Lewinski, Burton & Mayer and Kristine Krueger.

Honoraries: Kathy Rodgers in honor of Richard Driehaus’ birthday.

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

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. New hours: Monday – Saturday 10

a.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Closed on Tuesdays. Please visit often knowing your support will provide life changing assistance for the fellow creations in their care. Inspiration Ministries is home for up to 80 residents that live with multiple physical and mental challenges. I thank all of you for helping. For more information visit www.inspirationministries.org.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org