

Dear W.C.,

I have been taking care of my two grandchildren since my daughter left them in my care three months ago. One night she dropped the children off when she was going out with friends and never returned. I know she had a problem with drugs and alcohol in the past and I'm sure she has fallen back into her addictions. She has called me several times but has not come by or told me where she is. I told her I need money to care for the children but she is only thinking of herself right now. I have started proceedings to be their legal guardians to protect them and also so I can try to get child support and assistance. I told my daughter I need to get this done but she has not cooperated to make it easier. Their father has never been a part of their lives. My daughter thinks I have money and can afford this when I am living on my social security. I have fallen behind in our utilities and I need clothing and school supplies for the children.

Dear Readers,

Drug abuse in our communities has continued to grow and alcoholism has always been a problem. I have seen many cases of grandparents raising their grandchildren due to drug addictions and alcoholism. Our communities are now being affected by drugs we used to consider only a problem in the inner city. These have an even worse affect on the children and seniors in our communities.

I went to visit this grandmother to assess their condition firsthand. She had not given me much detail in her letter on how extensive their poverty may be or even the age of the children. I knew they had to be in desperate need in some areas if they were only living off the grandmother's social security for several months. I wanted to see how serious the situation was.

I arrived at a small home that looked like many other older homes we all drive past each day. You would not think anyone was living in poverty when you drove past. You maybe just noticed the home needed some work and updating. I did not see a car in the driveway but the grandmother had not mentioned a car in her letter. When I knocked on the door it was opened a crack with a chain by a girl that looked to be a teenager. I could see she was concerned and probably thinking this stranger at her door may have something to do with her missing mother. I told her I was there to see the grandmother and asked if she was available to talk. The young woman closed and bolted the door before hopefully going to find her grandmother. I was glad to see the teenager was concerned about their safety.

I heard the girl shout, "Grandma there's someone at the door for you!" In a minute the door was opened by a senior woman who began to apologize for her granddaughter but I immediately put her at ease complimenting the young woman's good common sense. Once we were through with introductions and identification she invited me inside.

The grandmother led me right into the living room of the small home. She introduced me to the teenage girl and her preteen grandson. They both looked worried about me being there. I told them briefly who I was and how I was there to help. The young woman said, "I was

worried our mom had sent you and you were here to take us away from our Grandma.” I assured them I was not and that in fact I was there to see if I could help them stay with their grandmother. The boy said, “That would be awesome. I never want to leave here.” The grandmother hugged both the children and then asked them to go to their rooms so we could talk.

Once we were sure the children could not hear our conversation the senior woman began to tell me about the years of struggle with her daughter. Her face went from happy when she had her grandchildren in the room to stressed and lined with years of worry. The senior woman said, “When she was pregnant she managed to stay off the drugs and alcohol. But after the birth of my grandson twelve years ago she started up again. After nearly dying of an overdose she went into rehab and got herself clean again. I took care of the children during that time and then when I thought she was straight for good she got them back. She managed to hide her drugs and drinking from me and the kids for the past year until the last few weeks before she left. The children are smart. They knew what she was doing and so did I. I threatened to take them away again but she decided it would be easier for her if she just left. That did not make it easy for me as I am now living on social security and have no legal custody of the children.”

We talked about her legal proceedings and what she had applied for so far. As they had no idea where the mother was and she most likely was not working it would be impossible to get child support from her. The father had never been accountable for the children and no one knew where he was. The children had only the grandmother to count on for their security and safety. I asked the grandmother how the grandchildren were adjusting and she said they were doing great. The grandmother added, “Considering the rough childhood they have had except when in my care they are very well adjusted. They both excel in school and have plans for college and their futures. They talk openly about the bad choices in life their mother has made. They know that is not the path they want to take.” I was very happy to hear this.

I asked the grandmother for her bills, check book and statements. She showed me all these and I could see she was behind in her utilities. The grandmother told me she owned the house and had lived there with her husband until he passed away ten years ago. She had her taxes and insurance she needed to keep up with. With the children in her care she said her social security barely covered these expenses along with food. The grandmother said, “I use every penny to keep these kids fed and make sure I keep up with the home expenses. I just cannot cover my utilities, prescriptions and the children need clothes and supplies for school.” I looked over the utility bills and could see they were on the verge of disconnection. I told the grandmother we would be able to bring their utilities up to date and help them with food, toiletries, clothing and school supplies. The grandmother had tears fill her eyes as I laid out a plan to help her and the grandchildren. The senior woman reached over and grasped my hand. I could see she had been trying to remain strong for the grandchildren and not wanting them to see the distress she was having. I continued to hold her hand as she cried and poured out all her worries over both her daughter and her ability to care for these children financially. I wrote down several people to contact that I knew could help her in her attempts to get the proper assistance. The senior woman was very grateful and began to wipe away her tears.

After a few minutes she said, "I don't know what came over me. I am always so strong. I have had a lot of hard times in my life but I always keep my faith. I prayed on what I should do and the next day I was led to The Time Is Now to Help. God knew right where to direct me." We both smiled and hugged.

After finishing my evaluation the children came back out and we spoke for awhile. I talked to them about their plans for school and I found them to be just as ambitious and well adjusted as the grandmother had told me. They both hugged their grandmother and asked if she was feeling better. The grandmother asked, "What do you mean? I haven't been sick." The older girl answered, "Yes you have. I could see you were trying to hide your worry from us. I have spent years living with someone that hides things from me so I know when you are not really happy Grandma. From now on you share with us what is going on and we can help." The grandmother began to cry again and said, "I promise. And you two are going to be just fine thanks to The Time is Now to Help."

A few months later I contacted the grandmother. Her advocates had helped her find the mother and secure custody and child support payments through the court system. Their budget we had prepared together was doing well and she profusely thanked The Time is Now to Help for our assistance. Thank you to all of you that took away the stress of poverty from this grandmother and grandchildren.

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, James & Lynne Newman Foundation, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Alan Cornue, Lauderdale Lakes Yacht Club, Alden United Methodist Church, Walter & Florence Strumpf, Nancy Anderson, Jacob & Janice Friesema, Jody & Beth Rendall, Marvin & Audrey Hersko, Michael & Kathe Beach, David & Wallie Leitzke, William & Janice Hawkins II, Dr. Mark & Cynthia Brower, John & Marian McClellan, Gerald & Marilyn Wilkin, John & Rita Race, Barry & Geraldine Lutz, Karen Lawrence, Dr. & Mrs. D. Patterson, Dorothy Tookey, Al & Ellen Burnell, 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: Peggy Cardiff in memory of Dot Cardiff, Marty Hansen & Lisa Haydam. The following donations were given in loving memory of Dorothy "Dotsy" Heffernan: Colleen Heffernan, D.J. Heffernan, Shawn & Kristin Heffernan, Catherine Fink, Steven & Laurie Lois, Gerald & Julie Mc Farlin, The Rondinelli Family, Thomas & Cora Janus, Julia Redwine, Joan Ludwig, Loreen Buesing, Dr. Robert & Elizabeth Dillman, .

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.

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