

Dear W.C.,

I am writing to see if you can help my little dog. She is my only companion and I am so worried about her. She has a big tumor that keeps growing and I can't afford to take her to the vet. I love her so much and I feel terrible that I can't get her the medical care she needs. I know there are probably lots of people writing you letters for help right now but you are my only hope.

Dear Readers,

Many of you probably do not know we have a separate fund that donors can specify to be used for veterinary care. It is not the main focus of our work but we have found over the years that some of our clients do have pets and these pets play an important role in their lives, especially for the lonely senior citizens or handicapped individuals we often provide assistance for. Often these pets, with their unconditional love, are their only companions. Only the donations made specifically for pet care are used for this assistance. Sometimes a request for help with a car repair, beds and even pets lead to other assistance provided as we may find food insecurity, utility disconnection and other areas of assistance needed. This simple letter asking for help with veterinary care for a beloved pet led us to find even more distressing areas of poverty that this fellow creation with special challenges was suffering from.

After reviewing the letter I had a feeling that there was much more we would find than the veterinary care requested. Often times pride gets in the way of our clients asking for assistance with more than what they feel is most important to them. To this person it was clear their caring pet was the most important assistance wanted, to the point of neglecting their own well-being when living on such a limited disability income. I made the phone call to the handicapped woman and listened as she tearfully shared with me her distress over the medical needs for her pet. After only a few minutes on the phone I could tell she needed other assistance. I inquired about her food insecurity and she tried to change the subject. I am persistent with my questioning and eventually she told me she did not have a working refrigerator. I asked her about her utility bills and after repeatedly asking her she finally shared with me her high utility bills due to using space heaters to heat her old home. When I inquired further she finally told me the furnace had been broken for the past year and she could not afford to have it fixed. When I told her I would like to come over to evaluate her living conditions she immediately declined. She made many excuses but finally admitted she was too embarrassed about how she lived. After a long conversation sharing the many ways we have helped people, and their pets, including telling her how our assistance is meant to remove her pains of poverty and how that poverty was not only affecting her but her pet as well, she finally agreed to let one of the contractors we use go to her home to evaluate her furnace.

The next morning I received the phone call I expected from the contractor and he shared with me the bad news of what he had encountered. He told me how the home was so cold the woman had all the outer rooms closed off and lived in just the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. After receiving his reasonable quote, along with advice for other repairs that

should be completed to make the home habitable and other red flags of poverty he noticed, I was convinced I had to pay a home check. Even though she clearly did not want to be embarrassed by my visit, I got in my car and drove over to visit.

I knocked on the door of the home and heard a dog barking on the other side of the door. When the door opened I was greeted enthusiastically by the little dog with a cone on her head and visible stitches. I bent over to meet the little dog that our pet care donors had provided the surgery for. Knowing this handicapped woman loved this little dog with all her heart I knew I had to win over the dog to win over our human client as well. After a minute the little dog thought I was her best friend so I knew I had a chance to win over the trust of the dog's owner. I stood up and introduced myself to the surprised woman that leaned on her walker. I could see she was embarrassed and said, "I didn't know you were coming. I thought just the furnace repair man was coming over." When I told her how I felt there was possibly more areas she needed assistance in she tried to decline. The woman said, "You have done so much just helping my little Chloe. That is more than I can ever thank you for. The vet said she would surely have died if we did not do the surgery. I don't know what I would have done if I lost her. I could never ask for more than what you have already given me."

After some more convincing, and Chloe clearly wanting her new friend to come in for a visit, the handicapped woman invited me inside. I followed behind her as she slowly made her way into the chilly kitchen with her walker. There were indeed signs of poverty everywhere I looked. The jacket she wore, the electric cook top on the counter indicating she possibly did not have a working stove in addition to a nonworking refrigerator, the closed doors with rugs and blankets to try and keep the cold drafts from seeping in, all showed me there was more assistance needed here than requested. I told the woman how we provide our assistance. I shared with her how all of "You" allow us to together provide the help needed to lift our fellow creations out of the suffering of poverty. The woman shook her head in disbelief and tried to deny she was suffering. I walked to her refrigerator and asked how she kept food for herself and Chloe. The woman pointed to the small porch outside the back door and I opened it to find a small carton of milk and a package of cheese slices on the stoop. I then looked at her stove and saw it indeed was not working. The cabinets were nearly empty other than a few cans of soup. I asked the woman how she obtained food and she said she counted on her neighbor who had a car to pick her up a few things when she had the money.

I asked the woman if she would share with me her bills, especially her utility bills. The only expenses the handicapped woman had were a phone bill, electric and gas. The phone bill was paid, the gas bill was low due to her only using it for hot water and not having a working stove or furnace, but her electric bill was very high due to having the space heaters running day and night to try and keep the home heated. I knew this would be remedied once the new high efficiency furnace was installed but until then she would be carrying this high electric bill until the spring disconnection dates began along with late fees. Our assistance was coming just in time to prevent any further decline into poverty this woman was facing.

Once I finished evaluating the living conditions of this handicapped woman and Chloe the dog I was relieved we had found her. If it hadn't been for the cute little Chloe needing

surgery she would never have requested our assistance. The love for a pet overrode all her hesitancy to ask for help and I was so glad she had. My heart broke over the thought of this handicapped woman and her pet living in the pains of poverty a moment longer. I called one of our volunteers to pick up some hot food to deliver while I continued my visit. I called a discount appliance store and gave them the measurements for the appliances needed. The broken appliances looked like they were the original appliances from possibly the 1950's and well beyond any repairable state. I called to order a new mattress to replace the dilapidated one I found. The woman listened as I made my phone calls and tried to stop me after every call, saying, "I don't need anything else. I can save up to pay the utility bill." When I went over her budget I asked, "Where do you see any funds left here to save? If I bring this bill up to date you will be able to afford your new bills going forward with the new efficient furnace and appliances."

Just then the volunteer knocked at the door and the woman tearfully said, "Please, I don't want anyone else to see how I live. I am so ashamed." I patted her hand and told her I would answer the door and not invite anyone else in unless she wanted them to enter. The woman shook her head no and began to cry. I walked to the door and took the food from our volunteer, explaining the woman was not ready for anymore visitors. Our volunteers are always understanding of whatever is best for our clients, understanding the woman's need for privacy.

The woman continued to cry as I placed the warm food before her. I handed her a spoon and fork and told her to please eat. She again looked ashamed but I watched as she relished the hot food, while sharing tidbits with Chloe. I placed some of the fresh foods delivered by our volunteer in her nearly empty cabinets, at least knowing she had enough food for a few days.

While she ate I outlined the areas of assistance we would be providing. In addition to the utility bills being paid, a new mattress, furnace and appliances, we would be providing her with grocery gift cards to give to her neighbor when shopping for her, allowing her to purchase more food in the future. When I had written this all down for her to see I watched as she read over the list. Again tears were spilling down her cheeks while she shook her head trying to deny our caring and sharing. I again patted her hand and smiled in reassurance.

Several weeks later this woman and her dog were living in a warm repaired home. She had a working refrigerator that now contained more than cheese slices and milk, now safely stored at the right temperature, and was able to cook small meals for herself. The woman was overjoyed with the new mattress as she had never slept in such comfort her whole life. She even mentioned how her sometimes painful disability was improved by the new mattress. This time when I stopped by I was greeted by both the dog Chloe and the woman enthusiastically. I saw a completely different woman that was no longer embarrassed and almost outgoing. She gave me a tearful hug of thanks, saying, "Please tell those people that donated to help Chloe and the ones that donated to help me how much they have changed my life. I cannot thank all of them enough." Thank you and God Bless you all for Caring and Sharing.

There are many of our fellow creations turning to us for help or being referred by others. The children, the handicapped, the elderly, those that cannot fend for themselves, those living in desperate need will be crying happy tears of relief thanks to all of "You", the Fox Charities New Year Wish \$25,000 Matching Grant and The Time Is Now to Help working together to provide poverty relief. Together "We" make a difference removing the pains of poverty for our fellow creations. Thank you and God Bless you.

Health & Happiness, Love & 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: Fox Charities, Barnabas Matching Grant, Larry & Sally Rayner, Kunes Country Auto Group, Gregg Kunes, Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation, Martin Business, J. Kruzan Construction & Remodeling, Bernard Labovitch, Hufcor Foundation, Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin, Grunow Family Fund, John Goodier, Ziegler Charitable Foundation, Edward Hechmann, Steven & Deidred Trumble, Colleen Heffernan, Gerald & Robin Dempsey, Robert Waddell, Thomas Morrissy, John & Valerie Lincoln, Kramer F&I Solutions, Kevin Kramer, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schuberth, Peter & Anna Vanderveld Foundation, Erich & Diane Lademann III, Lois Grossman, Jeanne Allen, Raymond & Kimberly Sommer, Steve & Betty Thornton, Karen Kayser, Dorothy Furman, Melody Fehling, Joseph & Cecilia Kowalski, Judith McKillop, William Kowalke, Charles & Penny Gruetzmacher, Harley & Dorothy Kurtz, Rita's Wells Street Salaon, James & Christine Lovell, Al & Rosemarie Reiherzer, Dr. Mark & Cynthia Brower, Donald Lightfield, Bruce & Loretta Adsit, Michael Glass, Mary Ann Milam, Jerrold Myers, Joseph Fusinato, 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.

Honoraries: Eugene & Jenean Shreves in honor of the Shreves/Bode Family. Virgil & Sharon Wuttke in honor of Gert Himebauch 100th Birthday & Mary Ellen Desings 90th Birthday. Diane Ripple in honor of David Ripple.

Memorials: Sue & Mike Borden in memory of Gayle Leep. Jody, Craig Jr. and Cara Cook in loving memory of Craig Cook. Paul Ziegler in memory of his dear friend Dorith Brown. Duane Harma in memory of his wife Donna. Patrick & Susan Cardiff in memory of Lisa Haydam. The following donations were given in memory of Edna Fish: Paul & Barb Cunningham, Ron & Pam Smith, Wayne & Elaine Vorpapel, Jerry & Kathy Sopher, Ed & Gail Knapp, Cora Jean Grecco, John & Peggy Tueting, Tom & Linda Schmidt, Walter & Mary York.

Prayer Chain: Please pray for healing for the following people: Mike, Caroline, Susan, Jennifer, Clarence, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynasha, Brandi's Grandma, Marilyn & Sal.

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 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed Sundays. 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