

Dear W.C.,

I am hoping you can help my neighbors. They are a family with two young children. The parents are both working now but the mother missed a lot of work over the winter when their youngest child became ill with the flu and it turned into pneumonia. The poor child was in the hospital for a week and then the mother became ill as well. The mother told me their health insurance has a high deductible so they had to pay all the bills out of pocket. Then the father's car broke down and they had to pay for that repair. Now I found out their utilities are disconnected. I asked them about it when I noticed their home was dark for several nights. When I went to their house to check on them I found my neighbor crying and their home was freezing inside. Now I know how you must feel when you visit people that are struggling financially. I let them plug in a space heater with an extension cord but I cannot afford to keep this plugged in for long because I am on a fixed income. I feel so bad for this family. They are good hardworking people like so many other people you help.

Dear Readers,

When there are children living in a home without utilities, especially as our weather seems to fluctuate between winter and summer temperatures, I consider it an emergency situation. Lack of utilities is more than just an inconvenience. The last thing a child that has recovered from pneumonia needs is sleeping in a home without heat. A lack of hot water for bathing, dishes and laundry is more than just a nuisance. The inability to store fresh foods and cook when you do not have natural gas, or electricity, or both, is more than an annoyance. It is an urgent situation.

I went to the address provided by the caring neighbor. I looked around the front of the home and noted the dark interior. I saw the long yellow extension cord running through the grass to the neighbor's home. When I walked up to the front door I thought I saw what looked like a camping lantern lit inside. All visible signs pointed to this family living without utilities.

When I knocked on the front door it was answered by a woman wearing a jacket. She was followed by a little boy that looked to be around two years old. He too had on a warm jacket. The woman cautiously asked who I was. I asked if she had ever heard about our charity The Time Is Now to Help. She said, "Briefly." I went on to explain who we were, telling her about our generous donors that allow us to help people with utilities, rent and other areas, and showed her my business card and identification. I told her a caring person had written in her behalf. She immediately said her neighbors name and asked, "Is that who wrote you a letter asking you to help us?" Since the neighbor had said I could let her know if she asked who wrote for them, I admitted that was who had written.

The woman asked me to wait at the door for a moment while she made a phone call. Within a minute the woman was back at the door saying, "I called my neighbor to confirm and she told me this is true. She told me to talk to you about what we are going through. She said you can help us. I asked her to come over and talk with us. Is that okay?" I answered, "If it makes you feel more comfortable of course that is fine with me." In a few minutes the neighbor woman arrived and after we introduced ourselves the woman opened the door and asked us to come inside.

I walked into the dark, cool interior of the home. There is a strange quietness about homes when the utilities are disconnected. No hum of the heat or refrigerator. No background noise of a radio or television. There also is a lack of warmth from the loss of lights and heat. I felt all these things as we walked into the kitchen that was dimly lit by the camping lantern. The little boy was curiously watching me from behind his mother. I said hello but he again hid behind his mother. As we all sat down to talk at the kitchen table the mother handed the boy a box of animal cookies and a juice box at a small children's table. The mother then asked if we would like anything, stating the obvious that she did not have cold or hot drinks. We both declined her courteous offer.

I explained what I would need to see to determine our best course of action to help their family. The woman questioned the personal nature of some of these documents and I explained my reasoning for this. After a thorough explanation of the need for these items and stating our privacy policy the woman went to gather the paper work. While she went through a sorter on the kitchen counter I looked around the small kitchen. The refrigerator was empty. I noticed a cooler outside the back door that the mother told me contained milk and cheese and that was about it. The cabinets held some cereal, bread, peanut butter and jelly. Also some canned soups. The mother told me they had a camp stove set up outside if they needed it.

The first thing I looked at was their overdue utility notices and disconnection notices. The mother told me about their long winter with several bad colds and flu's that kept her from work and their children in and out of the doctor's office. Even her husband had caught the flu but due to their financial situation had attempted dragging himself to work while running a 102 fever. She said the hospital stay had been extremely expensive but saved her young sons life. I looked at the hospital bill that had surpassed their high deductible for the year, but it was a deductible they could not even afford to pay. They were like millions of our fellow Americans who work hard but barely get by. They had no savings to fall back on, just enough to pay their bills each month and put food on the table. Now several setbacks and they were living without utilities, about to be evicted due to the utility disconnection and overdue rent.

After going over all their finances and seeing the medical and car repair bills, I could see where they had fallen behind. The mother had used all her sick days, so she had gone unpaid for several weeks. The car repair was what had put them over the brink with their bills. If they did not have the car repaired the husband could not get to work so they had used all their rent and utility money to pay for the car repair. It was a seemingly hopeless spiral down into poverty that I had seen many times over the years. While I went over my notes I listened to the women chatting and interacting with the little boy. I heard the little boy giggling and looked up to see the mother and son hugging and laughing. I could see the love the mother had for her little boy. I knew how hard it must be for this mother to watch her children living in a home without lights, fresh food, warm water for bathing, heat or the ability to cook, yet she could still share a smile with her child. And not only that, the child seemed to not be bothered by the loss of comforts provided by utilities. All this child knew was he was loved.

When I commented on this the mother looked at me and then I saw the pain in her eyes. The pain she kept well hidden from her young son. I saw the unshed tears spring into her eyes and knew she was fighting to keep the smile on her face. After a moment she said, "How could we not smile around this guy? He and my daughter are the lights of our lives." Then she added softly, so her son wouldn't hear, "Ever since he nearly died this winter I am filled with gratitude for his return to health. Losing utilities is nothing compared to nearly losing my child. I am determined to be happy around my son every day as every day is a gift." I watched as she quickly swiped away tears that had escaped her pained eyes and turned her attention back to her young son.

I admired her strength and had to agree she had put her situation in the proper perspective. The financial pains of poverty can be overcome thanks to all of "You" and The Time is Now to Help working together. We could at least do that for this struggling family. I told the woman what our plan of action would be. She sat incredulous as I told her we would be paying their overdue rent, getting their utilities restored immediately and paying some into the future. We also provided this family with gift cards for good nutritious food and gas for their work commutes. All this would allow the family to get back on their feet and allow them to catch up on some remaining outstanding expenses. The woman sat in shocked silence for a minute. Then the mother said to her neighbor, "Did you really write a letter to this man requesting help? Do you realize how much this has helped us?" The neighbor replied, "Yes I did. And I am so thankful I did." The mother then turned to me asking, "When you came to my door I almost didn't answer because you were a stranger but something told me to open the door. Now I know it must have been my guardian angel telling me to open that door. We would not have made it another week in this home and I lived every day with the fear of becoming homeless. I can never thank you enough for saving my children from going through that." I watched the mother wipe away her tears as she added, "Please thank everyone for saving us."

After our assistance this family was saved from the pains of poverty they were living in. Their utilities were restored, their rent paid, their refrigerator turned on and filled. Thank all of “You” for saving this family. You are a blessing to many.

Thank “You” for supporting our mission and helping us provide this life changing assistance. We will continue to provide this life changing assistance, sharing love and God’s blessings, thanks to all of “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:** Family Foundation, The Gallo Family Fund, Scott & Lisa Stearns, Fox Charities, Martin Business, John Stensland & Family, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schuberth, Jeannene Smarslik, Rita Stacy, Donna Schwall, Ed & Sharon Christensen, Gregory Swanson, William & Beth Norton, Elkhorn Chemical & Packaging, Rita’s Wells Street Salon, Robert Ribordy, Anna Kiel, Patricia Jankowski, Gene Krauklis, Carolyn May Essel, Kathryn Drexler, Joanne Zeasman, Cynthia Gardner, Marilyn Carver, William Antti, Joseph & Beth Pizzo, 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.

**Prayer Chain:** The power of prayer and positive thoughts comes from the true healer, our Lord answering our prayers. Please pray for healing for the following people: Mike, Caroline, Susan, Jennifer, Clarence, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynesha, Brandi’s Grandma, & Marilyn.

**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. 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](http://www.inspirationministries.org).

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