

Dear W.C.,

I work for an apartment complex doing repairs and maintenance. I was sent to fix a sink for one of the tenants and was upset by what I found. The tenant is an older woman that is visually impaired. I noticed her special glasses and the way she was feeling along the walls to get around. She told me she is legally blind. From the looks of things I can tell she is having a hard time. She talked to me while I was working on her sink and told me she moved here last year to be closer to her son who had cancer. The tragic thing is her son died right after she moved here and she has no one else to help her. She told me she has applied for housing assistance and contacted other agencies but no one has contacted her back yet. I don't know how she is getting by just on her social security between the rent, utilities and food. I felt I had to do something to try and help this woman as she seems like a real nice lady. She even offered me some refreshments but when she opened her refrigerator I didn't see hardly anything in there so I declined. She has hardly any furniture and I noticed her old couch seemed to be made up into her bed. I am a single father and a veteran that lives on a very tight budget, so I know I can't help her but I just can't stop thinking about this poor lady and want to at least try to do something.

Dear Readers,

Many people do not know what our clients go through until they come across someone in need. If we did not share with you every week the plight of someone living in poverty throughout our communities, most likely you would never know they were there. You would not feel the pains of poverty we try to relay in our weekly column. Their situations would become worse with each passing day, with no hope in sight. Thanks to all of "You", our caring donors and supporters, and the caring neighbors, friends, teachers, social workers and many other people that bring people in need to our attention, we are able to assist these fellow Americans.

I called the gentleman that had written the letter of request to obtain some additional information. We had a very moving conversation where he shared some details of his own difficult life, but he firmly declined any offers of help. He was determined that any help that is provided would go to this visually impaired woman. His words were, "I have seen a lot of poor people both in my time in the military and working in these apartments, but never one that affected me like this woman. There was just something so sad about her and the way she is living." He gave me the woman's phone number so I could set up a time to visit.

The woman answered her phone and seemed confused by who I was. I went on to tell her about The Time Is Now to Help, all of "You" and the good works we do. I also told her about the gentleman that had been concerned about her and wanted her to get some help. The woman said, "He was such a nice man and seemed worried about me. He kept asking if

there was anything else he could do after he fixed my sink.” When I was through with my introduction to our charity, I asked her if I would be able to come by and talk some more about our assistance. The phone was quiet for a minute, as if she was thinking of her response. A few seconds later she answered, “Yes.” I told her I would be right over.

I arrived at the apartment building that was out in the country a ways. I knew this had to be even more challenging for the woman as she probably was not able to drive. I knocked on the door and waited as it was finally opened by a woman that wore very thick glasses and yet I could see she still struggled to see my face. She reached out to shake my hand but I could tell she did not know where my hand was. I reached out to take her hand and she firmly shook mine. She held open the door to the small empty apartment.

I asked the woman how she had ended up this far away from town. She said she had been living out of state and had housing assistance then. When her son had become so sick she did not know what to do as he did not have anyone to help him. The woman said, “I gave up my apartment and all my benefits and moved. I just knew I wanted to be here to comfort him. My son died six weeks later but I do not regret having been here with him. It was the hardest thing I’ve ever done, much harder than losing my sight. I have been unable to return to my old apartment because they leased it to someone else immediately. I am on a waiting list now for another apartment and my housing benefits I gave up in my haste to be here. I truly thought my son would beat the cancer and I would stay here with him forever. Now I’m living in my son’s old apartment and I realize he had been sick for a long time before he told me about it. He had sold all his belongings before I even got here. I sold his car for \$2,500 after he died and that is what helped me get by until now.” The woman was crying as she told me some more details about her sons passing. It had not been easy and she was filled with grief over the loss of her only child. We spoke about her son awhile longer and I tried to offer words of comfort when her grief seemed to overwhelm her. There are simply no words that can remove the pains of loss and grief.

Going over the woman’s expenses I could see how she could not afford to continue living there. The utilities and rent were too high for her fixed income. She had very little food and no bed or furniture. The bedding I saw on the couch was worn and frayed. She was paying for people to drive her to groceries and had been skipping her medical care. She shared with me her expenses from her previous housing out of state and it was clear she needed to return to that state.

I offered to call her previous landlord to speak in her behalf. She agreed and gave me their phone number. The landlord was understanding and spoke highly of the woman but did not have anything available for two months. I asked if she could have that apartment in two months and he said if she had her housing assistance by then he would make sure she got it. I

told the landlord we would be willing to pay the rent if needed when the apartment became available so she would have a safe place to go. The rent, even without her housing assistance, was much lower than the current rent she was struggling to pay. The woman also shared she had a few friends that lived there and they all helped each other. In fact one of those friends had driven her to her son's apartment when she had moved. That same friend had been offering to pick her up for the past six months. I told the woman she could call her friend to pick her up in two months when her apartment became available. It was the first time I saw the woman's sad face light up with hope.

Our assistance would be given several times over the next two months. Our first assistance was given with hot food delivered to her home by a volunteer during our first meeting. I wanted to introduce our volunteer so she would know who would be helping her until she moved again. This same volunteer dropped off hot food along with groceries weekly to make sure she had nutritious food to eat.

Our next assistance was to bring her rent and utilities up to date and paid into the future to make sure she did not have an outstanding balance when she moved again. We also provided her with a new bed and some new bedding, even though she tried to decline. Looking at the old lumpy couch she was trying to sleep on I knew we had to help with a bed. I asked what kind of vehicle her friend would be picking her up with and was happy to hear a pickup truck so they could hopefully fit the twin bed in so she could have a bed in her new apartment. We also provided her with some gas gift cards for her transportation costs.

When the woman finally heard from her landlord she was ready for her move. Her friend drove six hours to pick her up, and with the help of the volunteer, the twin bed and her few belongings were loaded in the pickup truck. The volunteer even thoughtfully put together a bag of snacks and some sandwiches for the road. We paid her first month's rent but that would be all that is necessary since her housing was thankfully approved. At our final visit we said our goodbyes. I looked at this woman who had been much too thin and nearly consumed with grief at our first meeting, and now saw a woman that looked much healthier and even hopeful for her future. She again reached out, but this time for a hug. We said a tearful goodbye but they were tears of happiness as we were both happy with the progress she had made, thanks to all of "You". No longer would she be living alone and hungry, immersed in her grief. Even with her visual impairment she could live independently with the help of her friends. We would never have known this woman was living in such pains of poverty without the letter from a caring veteran. Thank you to him and all of "You" for allowing us to provide this life changing assistance.

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 Schubert, Christine Adams, Thomas Morrissy, Black Point Estate, Aurora Health Care Employee Partnership Campaign, Jeanine Cowan, Kayla Plier, Kathleen Herr, Tom Wigton, Laura Manley, Jeanne Mc Donald, Lisa Loepke, Heidi Hall, Marilee Peppey, Mary Cucchi, Shawna Kneipper, Paul Symons, Gene Krauklis, Sandra Chinn, Richard & Dianne Dakich, Philip & Helen Joyce, AbbVie Employee Engagement Fund, Phyllis Heinrich, Jeanne Allen, George & Laretta Clettenberg, John Race, Raymond & Kimberly Sommer, James & Shari Loback, John & Marian McClellan, Joyce & Kenneth Pagel, 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 loving memory of Dot Cardiff and Lisa Haydam. Daniel & Donna Casey in memory of their sister Eileen.

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.

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