

Being a Good Neighbor

We have a big announcement this week. The Time Is Now to Help founder, Sal Dimiceli, Sr. has been chosen as a National Association of Realtors finalist of *REALTOR® Magazine's* 2017 Good Neighbor Award. This is a huge honor as it will bring national attention to our charity and the poverty relief we provide. The Good Neighbor Award is a NATIONAL award, given by the largest trade association in the world, recognizing realtors that do exceptional community service work. Many of you know Sal as the man with a generous heart that helps people suffering due to poverty throughout our communities, but you do not know that Sal also is the full-time broker/owner of Lake Geneva Area Realty. Sal's dedication and hard work to both his charity and his business will be shown even more in the next few months as Realtor magazine covers his story. The public can vote for their favorite of the 10 Good Neighbor finalists. The three finalists who get the most votes will be Web Choice winners and will take home an additional donation up to \$2,500. Please cast your votes for Sal at www.realtor.com/goodneighbor now through October 2. You may vote multiple times each day!

Dear W.C.,

I am the caregiver for my husband and son. They are both disabled. My husband is waiting for a heart transplant. My son has a rare brain disease that has left him bedridden and completely disabled. He does not even know his own child any longer. My son was a single father when he began to show signs of his disease five years ago so I have been granted full custody of my teenage granddaughter. I had emergency surgery several months ago with complications that kept me hospitalized for two weeks. I have had a long recovery but am now finally able to start caring for my family once more. Through all this my granddaughter worked hard caring for her father and my husband in between the nurse visits. Due to all the medical bills, loss of pay while I was too sick to care for my son and my car needing a repair we have fallen behind in all our bills. When you live on the edge of poverty it doesn't take much to put you right over the edge. We are over that edge now and we don't know how we will recover. Our fixed income does not allow for savings or any expenses over our set budget. My granddaughter will be going back to school soon and does not have school supplies, clothing or shoes that fit properly. Please help!

Dear Readers,

I have had people question the situations I find our clients living in. Are they really dealing with that many disabilities and illnesses? Are they really living without food and other necessities? The answers are yes and yes, a resounding yes. The beautiful area we live in does a good job camouflaging the hidden poverty among us.

This family did a good job hiding their poverty from their neighbors. No one would know when looking at them from the outside that they lived with so many disabilities and health emergencies. When driving by their home you could not tell their utilities were about to be disconnected or they were about to lose their home. They were our unknown neighbors that suffer in silence. Thanks to all of “You” this woman and her family did not have to suffer in silence any longer.

I went to the home listed on the letter of request. It was a small home in a modest area. You would not know the suffering inside when driving by. It looked like many other homes in its neighborhood. I walked to the door, like I usually do, wondering what I would find inside, praying it was not as bad as, or even worse than I have seen in the past. I would find out as soon as I knocked on the door and was let into their lives.

The door was answered by the woman that had written the letter requesting our assistance. After we introduced ourselves she invited me inside. I walked into what was once a small living room but now looked more like a hospital room. A hospital bed took up most of the room and in it was who I assumed was the son with the rare brain disease. She introduced me to her son but there was no response. He looked at his mother though and I saw the recognition on his face. She tearfully told me how the disease had stolen his life, his memories and his abilities and would eventually take his life. He would soon need assistance with breathing and was already on a feeding tube. The woman said, “This is my son and I am the only one he recognizes now. No parent should ever have to see their child go before them, much less like this.” I could not agree more. The thought of going through something so painful with one of my own children filled me with compassion for this woman and her incredible strength.

After talking for some time about his disease and the affect it had on him and their family, she took me into the adjoining kitchen to meet her husband. He was in the kitchen sitting in a wheelchair watching television on a small TV. He had an oxygen tank and looked frail. He was not that old but his advanced heart disease had stolen his life. He weakly shook my hand and we talked for a few minutes. I noted how tired he became almost immediately, knowing he hardly had the energy to keep up a conversation. After the woman made sure both her husband and son were comfortable we went to sit at a small table where she could keep an eye on them. The granddaughter was at a friend’s so we could talk freely. The woman said, “This table is the only spot where my granddaughter and I can sit and talk. We don’t like to talk in front of my husband and son about what is happening. Even if my son can’t respond we don’t want to think he can actually understand what we are saying and be distressed. My husband has such limited heart function left I do not want to stress him over our financial problems as well. He was always the hard worker that took care of me and my granddaughter. Now he is helpless and it is eating him up inside.”

Hearing how he was once a proud man who cared for his family made seeing him in his present condition even harder. While I looked around the kitchen the woman gathered all her financial documents and bills. The woman told me how she was actually paid to care for her own son but since she had been off due to her surgery and long recovery she had not received her pay for several months. Assistance was paying for someone else to come in and care for her son while she was in the hospital. The loss of those funds had a huge effect on their budget. The woman told me how she had just been medically released back to being her son's caregiver but now they were too far behind to catch up. They also had to travel to a university hospital for both her husband and her son's care as it was very specialized and not treated at local hospitals. This required many long drives and subsequent gas usage.

I looked over the late mortgage payment notices and utility disconnection notices. I could not imagine this family, with its need for power for the oxygen and bed with lift, living without utilities. The thought of this disabled man and son living without necessary heat during these cold nights was unthinkable. We could not let this family, during its most desperate time of need, live like that. I looked around the home and found several areas they needed our assistance with. I saw where one of our volunteers could be a big help with food deliveries and made a call to have some food delivered. I made notes on the utilities that needed payment immediately to prevent disconnection. I copied mortgage information, a reasonable mortgage payment that they had paid for years with no problem, so I could go back to my office and get checks to bring them up to date and pay a payment into the future to allow them time to get back on their feet. It was the least we could do to help this family, our neighbor in need, struggling behind closed doors.

While I made my notes the woman went to check on her husband and son and I listened as she skillfully cared for them. Neither of the men looked unkempt or uncared for. I could see she had even taken the time to shave them both and they were on clean bedding. This was not poverty due to laziness or drug addiction. This was our good fellow Americans living in need of our help.

When the woman came back to finish our conversation I told her my plan to get them back on their feet. I told her I would be back with utility payments and mortgage payments. I told her about a volunteer coming to deliver food and handed her several grocery gift cards, gift cards for the granddaughters school clothes and supplies, and gas gift cards to help with their necessary trips to the hospital. I watched as her strong face softened some and her eyes filled with tears. Her voice wobbled as she asked, "You are doing all that for us? Are you serious?" I nodded my head and watched as the tears that had threatened now spilled down her face. I let her cry for a few minutes and then said, "You have been so strong for your family. We want to help." I took this opportunity to tell her about all of "You", our generous donors, who make our good works possible. The woman said, "Well we can't thank all of them

enough for all their help. They saved us. We would have for sure lost everything. I don't even know what we would have done or where we would have gone..." I answered, "Well, now you don't have to worry about that." All I could do was watch as I saw the first smile since I had arrived light up her face. That smile was all thanks to all of "You", your kindness and generosity to the people suffering in silence in our communities. Thank you, thank you. "You" have made it possible for this family to live without the constant fear of food insecurity, utility disconnection and foreclosure. They have many challenges in their future. Both men are gravely ill but "You" have at least removed the pains of poverty. It was the least we could do.

Please donate knowing every dollar you give will be matched by the Richard H. Driehaus \$30,000 Matching grant, doubling your donation, removing twice as much pain, sorrow and fear of poverty. As we continue to work very hard verifying the genuine need of good people, we need your continued support. Together "We" need to carry on our good works that make our mission for God a success. Together "We" make a big difference removing the pains of poverty for our fellow creations. Thank you and God Bless you. And please vote daily for our own Good Neighbor, at www.realtor.com/goodneighbor.

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, Martin Business, John Stensland & Family, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schuberth, The Harold & Bernice DeWeerd Family Foundation, Jack Fogle Memorial Foundation, Leroy & Barbara Madsen, Alan Cornue, ITW Foundation, Elkcast Aluminum, Peterson Drywall, John & Kathy Poiron, Kathleen Gallagher, Roland & Diane Schroeder, Shari & James Loback, Barbara Hill, Denise Hubbard, Judy Dishneau, Margaret Downing, 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: Arlene Clausen in memory of her dear friend Rachel Watson. Rev. Steven & Helen Buchanan in memory of their dear friend Rachel Watson. Peggy Cardiff in memory of Marty Hansen.

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, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynesha, Sheila, Adrian & Marilyn.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org