

Working Together to Heal

Dear Readers,

Two weeks ago our column contained an error in the title. The title stated the funds spent in the Barnabas Matching Grant were for the year, when in fact they were for the matching grant only. Thank you.

Dear W.C.,

I am a single mother that has struggled for many years to care for my son and I. My son's father was very abusive and violent and after five turbulent years living with him and trying to protect my son from his abuse we finally managed to get away. For the past thirteen years I raised my son on my own. I never received any child support because I did not want his father knowing where we were living. Last year I began having terrible pain in my knee. I've had pain in several of my joints due to the abuse I suffered but this was much worse. My job requires me to be on my feet for long hours so I really tried hard to push through the pain so I could get to work each day and pay my bills. I finally went to the doctor and it turns out I needed knee surgery. I had the surgery two months ago but had several setbacks since then. First I had a blood clot. Then I had an infection. It has been one thing after another and I have been in and out of the hospital several times over the past month. I just can't seem to literally get back on my feet. Meanwhile my utilities, car payment and rent are all late. I am an independent contractor so I do not receive unemployment. My son is away at college now and I do not want to ask him for help. He works to pay all his own expenses, has received scholarships and took out student loans to achieve his dream of wanting to be a doctor. I cannot ask him to give that up to take care of me. I would be very appreciative of any help you could offer to keep me from becoming homeless or losing my car.

Dear Readers,

Many of our fellow Americans live one paycheck away from falling behind in all their expenses. Most do not have any savings, or not enough to cover even one month's expenses. How can you save when you earn just enough to get by each week? When a single mother is raising children without support it is even more difficult to ever get ahead.

I went to visit this single woman with one of my volunteers. This volunteer is a senior woman who has also suffered abuse in the past. She had shared her personal story with me years ago when we had helped her too get out of poverty after the death of her abusive husband. Since then she has thrived and loves to share her time volunteering to help others. Now we would use her experience to help this younger woman get back on her feet.

We knocked on the door and waited for the woman to get to the door. In a few minutes the door was opened by a woman using a cane. She leaned heavily on the cane as she questioned us at the door. Once we showed our identification she immediately let us in saying, "Please come in. I have been hoping and praying you would come." I introduced our volunteer saying, "I hope you don't mind I brought one of our devoted volunteers. She is going to help me take notes today." The woman turned her attention to our volunteer and said, "I don't mind at all. In fact it is nice to have you here." I had a feeling she would feel more at ease with the comforting presence of my senior volunteer. The volunteer answered, "I am happy I could come along to help. Ten years ago it was me The Time Is Now to Help visited and I remember how overwhelmed I felt when he showed up at my door. I just want to let you know there is no reason to be worried or nervous. We are only here to help and before you know it you will be back on your feet." Our volunteer carried with her a bag of food she had picked up on her way. She lifted it up and asked the woman, "Do you mind if I put some of these items in the refrigerator? We brought you over a few things." The woman looked surprised as she answered, "You brought that for me? Of course you may. Let me show you to the kitchen."

We followed behind the woman as she slowly walked to the kitchen, thankful the apartment was small and she did not have to go far. As the volunteer unpacked the items she asked the woman if she would like something to eat, noticing the refrigerator was quite empty. The woman tried to decline but we could see she was hungry. I said, "Go ahead and eat. We ate before we came here." We sat to talk at the kitchen table while the volunteer made her a sandwich with the food she had brought. A few minutes later she gratefully took the sandwich and chips the volunteer prepared for her. It was easy to see the hunger with which she ate.

The volunteer asked the woman if she minded if she sat to take notes while we talked. She had offered to do this when I asked her to accompany me and we both agreed it would be helpful. The woman said she would be happy if she joined us. I pulled out the woman's letter, with the areas highlighted that I wanted to ask her about, and my worksheet I use for all recipients of our assistance. The first questions were about herself, her age, her job and her family. I asked about her son and she pointed to pictures of him all around the apartment. He was obviously her pride and joy. She told me about his goals he had made in high school to be a high honors student and to become a doctor one day. She proudly told me how he had achieved his goals and received several very helpful scholarships. She told me he was thriving and working hard at school and he came home to help on weekends when he could, but spent most of his time studying or working at his part-time job on campus. She assured me there was no way he could help her financially and that she would never ask him as he would give up his dream for her. The woman said, "I could never live with myself if he gives

up his dream. It is his way out of this life of struggle I have had. I would not give it up for a minute, as it let me raise the wonderful son I love with all my heart, but it has been hard.”

I asked about her job and confirmed it was one that made her reliant on tips and she did need to be on her feet for long periods of time. She was confident she would be able to return to work within a month, as her doctor had confirmed this at her last appointment. I could see the distress on her face as she explained her surgery and all the medical setbacks she had endured. Her recovery had taken much longer than usual and then what she had planned for. I finally got to asking her about the abuse that had caused the injuries to her both physically and I am sure psychologically as well. She paused when I asked these painful questions. I saw her look down and tears come to her eyes. She tried to speak several times but stopped to wipe away a tear each time. Finally she said with a shaking voice, “The abuse I withstood for five long years still gives me nightmares. It took years for me to not jump when a door opened or I saw a person standing outside our apartment. I left my sons father before he could turn his wrath on our son but he still remembers some things. I don’t know why I stayed for so long. I was terrified of his threats to find us and kill us both. I finally heard he had died eight years ago in a fight at a bar. All I could feel was relief. Relief he would not ever find us or hurt my son.” She was shaking and crying and I watched as the volunteer reached over and gave her a hug. This was again the reason why I had brought this volunteer as she too had once known the pain and fear of an abusive relationship.

Once we concluded talking about the woman’s past and present life, I thought it was time to talk about her future. I looked over the documents she had provided and asked the volunteer to make several notes. I saw the overdue car payments, rent and utilities. I asked what other assistance she had applied for but I also knew these would never get to her in time to save her from her present situation. She had done everything she could to help herself. She needed our helping hand now to get her to her final goal of preventing homelessness, car repossession and utility disconnection.

I looked over the careful notes taken by our volunteer and added a few more. I then read off the assistance that I determined would be the most helpful in her situation. We would be paying her overdue car payment and one more month to give her time to slowly get back to work. We also paid for three months’ rent and her overdue utilities with some extra to carry her over to the following month. I handed the woman some grocery and gas gift cards. She proudly tried to decline these but I slipped them back across the table and said, “Take these. You will need them before you get back to work.” The volunteer then offered to shop for her until she was completely on her feet again. The woman again had tears spring to her eyes as she asked, “You would do that for me?” The volunteer took her hand and said, “We two women have been through a lot. Someday it might be my turn to need some help and I know

you would do the same for me.” I could see these women, even with their age difference, would become good friends. They shared a bond that no person should have to share, being survivors of years of abuse.

The volunteer and I prepared to leave. As we gathered our notes and our jackets the two women exchanged phone numbers and set up their next visit. I asked the volunteer if she would like to do the follow up visit for me and she very happily agreed. This would give me more time to get to the stack of letters waiting for my next visit. We all held hands and said a prayer of healing for the woman’s knee, prayed for her son and prayed for all of “You” and the help you allow us to provide. We could never thank you enough for your generosity and caring that we then share 100% with our poverty stricken neighbors in need. Thank you and God Bless “You”.

Every dollar you donate at this time will be matched by the Bernie & Nancy Labovitch \$36,000 Matching Grant, not only doubling your donation but also doubling your poverty assistance. The children, the handicapped, the elderly, veterans, those that cannot fend for themselves, those living in desperate need will be crying happy tears of relief thanks to all of “You”, the Labovitch’s and The Time Is Now to Help working together to provide poverty relief. Together “We” make a positive change removing the pains of poverty for our fellow creations.

Health & Happiness, Love & God Bless Everyone, 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: Barnabas Matching Grant donors, Bernard & Nancy Labovitch, Clarence & Marilyn Schawk Family Foundation, Green Bay Packers Foundation, Electronic Specialties, Kunes Family Foundation, Unilock, John and Valerie Lincoln, Mary Kay Ring, Budget Blinds, Lake Geneva Economic Development Corporation, Bonnie Glennon, Jackie Leedle, Al Hermansen, Martin Business, John Stensland and Family, Peter and Anna Vanderveld Foundation, Albert and Ellen Burnell, Mark and Natalie Reno, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Schuberth, Landon Petrie Jr. and Nancy Schwab, Gerald and Robyn Dempsey, James and Cathy Beierle, Jeanette Logterman, Josef Esparza, Scott Annen, Bill Davit, Girum Beyene, Jeffrey Arnold, Michael Parish, Teresa Hurley, Rogers Klenske, James and Susan Mirabella Jr., Barbara Heatley, Sandralee Thiele, Richard and Christine Costa, Carl and Darcy Brewster Wallace, Karin Collamore, Nancy and Gary Bluemel, Gerard and Barbara Makovec, Jennifer Cernech, Roger Seymour, Susan Cardiff, 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: The following donations were made in honor of the marriage of Tom Earle and Lisa Kerr: Janet, Jeff, Andrea and Carl Miller, Judy and Dave Hernke, Jill and Leo Rausch. Diane Ripple in honor of David Ripple.

Memorials: Colleen Heffernan in memory of her mother Dorothy Heffernan.

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, Vince, Sylvia, Richard, Jennifer, Jayden, Santana, Alex, Lily, Kaitlyn, Kynesha, Sheila, Adrian, Sal and Marilyn.

Please visit: www.timeisnowtohelp.org