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# Businessman reaches out in Time

By [KAYLA BUNGE](#) ([Contact](#)) Sunday, Jan. 20, 2008

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Photo by [Al Hoch](#)

Lake Geneva's Sal Dimiceli starts charity organization.

Photo



Sal Dimiceli

LAKE GENEVA — Sal Dimiceli knows what it's like to go to bed hungry, to live in the dark, to watch his mother, the strongest woman he knew, cry.

But he considers his meager beginnings a blessing in disguise.

A child of poverty, who “miraculously” encountered financial success as an adult, Dimiceli made a vow to help good people who have fallen on hard times.

“I cannot know there's someone out there hurting and just sit here with a nest egg,” he said.

Dimiceli donated money to charitable organizations for years until his financial adviser told him to take a closer look at their books. Dimiceli quickly learned that many organizations used the money to pay for overhead costs.

Frustrated, Dimiceli wanted to start his own charitable organization—one with no overhead, one where every penny would go to help people in need. In 1989, he founded The Time is Now to Help, a nonprofit organization that provides poverty-stricken people with life's basic necessities: rent, utilities, food, clothing, toiletries, household items and transportation.

“I went out and looked for people,” Dimiceli said of his initial work. “I have a sixth sense about people who need help.”

He verifies every request for assistance himself, making sure money is spent wisely and where it's most needed.

Wanting to be humble in the eyes of God, Dimiceli remains relatively anonymous.

“People aren't supposed to be saying, ‘Hi, this is what I'm doing for God,’” he said. “It takes away the impact of what you're doing.”

Dimiceli went somewhat public only four years ago, occasionally revealing his identity—albeit under a pen name—in a column that appears weekly in two local newspapers.

“He keeps himself under the radar,” said Shannon Bray, president of Side by Side, a nonprofit human-concerns organization that helps local residents in Lake Geneva.

“It's not about him,” Bray said. “He doesn't do it to make himself feel good. They're just things that need to be done.”

“His regular job and his life end up being part time,” said Frank Guske of Lake Geneva, a local Scoutmaster who has worked with his troops to help food pantries in Walworth County.

“This is his gig.”

Dimiceli believes his experience in poverty was God's way of preparing him for his true life's work.

“It was overwhelming for me as a little child, but that ... has never left me,” he said. “That’s why I’m here. I want to help. That’s my purpose.”

Bray said Dimiceli is a born leader.

“People want to follow what he’s doing,” she said. “He brings out things in people they didn’t know they had.”

As such, a network of more than 40,000 people strong has built around Time is Now, allowing the organization to help about 500 people each year.

“He’s like Lake Geneva’s little disciple,” Guske said.

## SAL DIMICELI

**Age:** 56

**Community:** Lake Geneva

**Occupation:** Owner, Lake Geneva Area Realty; founder, The Time is Now to Help

**Family:** Wife; four children, ages 13 to 24

**When you’re not working, what are you doing:** Sleeping

**Words to live by:** “The time is now. It’s a conduit for us to exercise our free will to care and share with those less fortunate.”

**Three words that best describe you:** Soldier for God

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[babblinangel](#)

Jan 29, 2008 at 6:10 p.m.

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My husband and I had an altercation at a local car dealership. We chose to write a letter to the editor. Mr. Dimicelli called and asked about our experience. I didn't know him, and he didn't know us but he reached out to see how we were doing..He truly knows the meaning of "it takes a community..." More people should follow his lead.

[wiskitty](#)

Jan 23, 2008 at 12:53 p.m.

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When I went back to school to finish my nursing degree so could help get my own family out of the deep rut we were in, we ran into even more stumbling blocks. I had to quit work because of the schedule. I only had to go for 2 semesters and I was just over half way through. I suddenly couldn't pay rent, gas/electric and food. I didn't know where to go and asking for help was hard for me. I wrote Time is Now and they helped us twice. If not for them I would have had to quit school...again. I am 47 and knew I had to finish then. Thank God, for Mr. Dimiceli and Time is Now. My kids don't have to see me cry now. God bless you!!!

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