

Dear W.C.,

Eight months ago, I suffered a stroke that has left me permanently disabled. I shuffle with a walker, have not regained all my vision, and still struggle with my speech. Before my stroke, I worked full-time and never imagined I would one day find myself unable to provide for myself.

I have applied for disability, but I am still waiting for a response. In the meantime, what little savings I had has long since disappeared. I have fallen behind on my mortgage and utilities and am terrified that I may lose my home or have my electricity shut off.

I lie awake at night wondering what will happen if I am foreclosed on. Where would I go? How would I manage? I already struggle to get through simple daily tasks, and the stress only makes my recovery more difficult. I never imagined I would have to ask for help, but I do not know where else to turn.

Dear Readers,

I was surprised by the young voice I heard when I called this woman to learn more about her situation. Based on her letter, I had imagined someone much older. Instead, I spoke with a woman in her early fifties whose life had been dramatically altered in an instant.

I learned she had an underlying health condition she had been unaware of that made her more susceptible to strokes. She described to me the fear she feels every day navigating a world that suddenly became unfamiliar. Once independent and hardworking, she now struggles with tasks most of us take for granted. Walking across a room requires effort. Reading has become difficult because of her impaired vision. Even speaking can be exhausting, as she tires easily and often struggles to find the right words. Yet despite all she has endured, she remains remarkably humble and even apologetic about asking for assistance.

As we talked, I could hear the worry in her voice. Her greatest fear was no longer her health, it was replaced by the fear of losing the modest home she had worked so hard for before she had her stroke. For someone already coping with the emotional and physical aftermath of such a life altering event, the possibility of homelessness felt overwhelming.

Together, we worked to create a budget she could survive on moving forward. Her mortgage payment was less than most rent payments we have recently assisted with. I hoped she hadn't fallen too far behind to recover. When she told me she was two months behind I was relieved that we would be able to intervene before foreclosure became a real possibility.

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to provide those two mortgage payments and two additional months of payments to see her through until her disability benefits began. We also would bring her utility payments up to date and provide an extra credit balance to allow her time to stabilize financially. Gift cards for groceries, toiletries, and other daily necessities were provided as well to ease some of the additional burdens she was facing.

During our conversation, the woman shared the one bright spot in her life right now, her dear friend who stops by regularly and also takes her to her doctor's appointments. When I asked if the friend could use help with a gas gift card, the woman suddenly broke down in tears of gratitude. Through her emotion, she explained that her friend had been quietly struggling financially while helping her without complaint.

Because of your support, we were able to provide the poverty relief assistance needed to help this woman until additional resources began. Even through the woman's obvious exhaustion and slurred speech, I could clearly make out the words she said before we ended our conversation, "I finally feel like I can breathe again."

That is the true impact of our charity work. Beyond paying a bill or preventing a utility disconnection or eviction, we also restore dignity, hope, and stability during someone's darkest moment.

Not long after providing this assistance we were relieved to learn she began to receive her disability payments. Knowing she could remain safely in her home and continue focusing on her recovery brought comfort to all of us. We are grateful we were able to help this stroke survivor through one of the most frightening times of her life while preventing the loss of her home.

Thanks to your incredible support and generosity we have officially met the Spring Family Legacy \$50,000 Matching Grant. We will soon share with you where every penny is being spent providing poverty relief to those most in need. Thank you to our matching grant providers and all of "You" who continue making our charity work possible!

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. You will receive a tax deductible, itemized thank you receipt showing how 100% of your donation was used for providing poverty relief.

Please visit our website to read more of our past and current columns and/or to make a donation: www.timeisnowtohelp.org Please go to the home page, follow the yellow highlighted link that says WC Letters to see current and past columns.

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Memorials: Timothy and Brenda Wegge in memory of Russell Wegge. Sal and Corinne Dimiceli and family in loving memory of Marilyn Schawk.

Honoraries: Roman and Carol Henningfeld in honor of Harvey Altenberg's Birthday.

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