

Last week we quietly passed a milestone that we never expected to see, our 23rd year of sharing our charity work through this weekly column. It is hard to believe so much time has passed since that first column in 2003. What began as a way of reaching people in need of poverty relief, and making the needs in our community known, quickly grew into something far greater than we ever imagined. It became a bridge between neighbors, a place where struggles, too often hidden behind closed doors, could be seen, understood, and met with compassion. Through this column, countless people found not only assistance, but the reassurance that someone cared and that they were not alone in their hardships.

One of the first letters we received in 2003 was from a 14-year-old boy asking for assistance for his mother when they were struggling after leaving an abusive marriage. Like many of the fellow creations we have helped over the years, they were dealing with utility disconnection, pending homelessness, lack of necessities, and hunger. Another letter came from a co-worker worried about an elderly woman in her place of work. The need for The Time is Now to Help and the assistance we provide was evident then and continues to be evident in all the letters we have received over the past 23 years.

There is much we have to be grateful for over these years. The many volunteers who selflessly shared their time and resources. The donors who have read our column and have been moved to donate the funds needed to continue our poverty relief efforts that provide assistance to over 600 people each year. We also are grateful for the landlords who gave struggling tenants one more chance, mechanics who discounted repairs to keep a family working, and community members who chose kindness when someone needed help the most.

The thousands of lives that have been touched and saved over these years are immeasurable. The amount of heartbreak and hopelessness we have removed cannot be calculated. We have sat with widows facing unimaginable loss, single parents trying to stretch every dollar, elderly individuals forced to choose between medications and groceries, and families devastated by illness, job loss, disability, or tragedy. We have celebrated victories too, the many people who found stable housing after months of uncertainty, the fathers and mothers who kept their jobs because safe transportation was restored or provided, the children who no longer had to wonder where their next meal would come from.

What has remained constant through every year is the reminder that poverty does not discriminate. It can affect the hardworking family next door, the senior citizen living quietly on a fixed income, the person you see each week in church, the children attending

our local schools, or the person who never imagined they would one day need help. So often, the difference between stability and crisis is one unexpected expense, one medical diagnosis, one lost paycheck, or one heartbreaking life event.

This column has also taught us something deeply important: good people truly want to help when they understand the need. Time and time again, readers have stepped forward with generosity that has restored our faith in humanity. A donation made in memory of a loved one, a volunteer willing to give up an evening, a matching grant to encourage donors, a business owner offering discounted services, or someone simply sharing our mission with others, each act of kindness becomes a much larger part of our continuing story of hope.

As we reflect on these past 23 years, we do so with tremendous gratitude. Gratitude for every person who trusted us enough to reach out and share their story, every donor who made help possible, every volunteer who stood beside us, and every reader who continues to follow this journey. While the needs in our community remain great, so does the compassion of those willing to help meet them.

Thank you for allowing us to continue sharing these stories of hardship, resilience, and hope. We never expected this column to span more than two decades, but because of your support, it has become a testament to what is possible when a community comes together to care for one another. Our poverty relief efforts continue, and so does our belief that even in the darkest moments, kindness still changes lives.

We have nearly met the Spring Family Legacy \$50,000 Matching Grant. We are so blessed to have the amazing support of our matching grant providers and all of “You” who make 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](http://www.timeisnowtohelp.org) Please go to the home page, follow the yellow highlighted link that says WC Letters to see current and past columns.**

**A Very Special Thank You:** Family Legacy Donors, Family Foundation, Kunes Family Foundation, Ziegler Charitable Foundation, Paul Ziegler, Dr. Mark and Cynthia

Brower, Albert and Ellen Burnell, Lee and Barbara Zuzanek, Morgan Stanley GIFT, Kathleen and Brian Hurdis Charitable Fund, Jeff Martin, The Chuck and Barb Taylor Charitable Fund, Paper Dolls, Kathryn Drexler, Monroe and Birdeen Putnam, Lake Geneva Area Realty, Allen and Dorothy Hermansen, William and Patricia Antti, Jeanne Kuttbauer, Daniel and Ruth Haak, David Levitan, Steven and Gabrielle Thomas, Joyce Pagel, James Dyer, Floyd and Kathryn Petrie Jr., Beth and Jody Rendall, Charles and Kathleen Heinz, Church of Jesus Christ LDS, Beverly Mather, William and Jean Isaacson, all of our anonymous donors and ALL of you who support The Time Is Now to Help. Anyone who would like a Time Is Now donation box in your business, please call (262) 249-7000.

**Memorials:** Timothy and Brenda Wegge in memory of Russell Wegge.

**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: Trae, Bill, Brian, Mike, Sylvia, Megan, Kayla, Maria C., Judy, Scott, Annie, Brandon, Helen, Dennis, Mary, Joseph, Jordan, Jean, Tom L., Dr. Peter, Matthew, Pam E., Jenene B., John S., Patricia H., Wendy, Eric, Anthony, Mary, Charlie, Tom P., Christina, Mike, Cheryl, Bryan E., Betty, Ellie, Concetta, Cheryl, Kirubel M., Wanda L., Joan, Bruce, and Andy.

Please visit: [www.timeisnowtohelp.org](http://www.timeisnowtohelp.org)