

Dear W.C.,

I am a single mother with a three-year-old daughter. A few months ago, my mother passed away unexpectedly, leaving my 13-year-old brother and 11-year-old sister without a parent. After her passing, I made the difficult but necessary decision to take them into my home and become their legal guardian.

While I would not change that decision for anything, it has created significant financial challenges. I have applied for assistance programs and benefits for my siblings, but there have been delays in processing and receiving help. In the meantime, I have had to manage the additional expenses on my own.

One of my biggest challenges is housing. My landlord has informed me that we can no longer remain in our two-bedroom apartment because of the additional members of our household. I was fortunate to find a larger apartment that can accommodate all of us, but the landlord is requiring a two-month security deposit that is impossible for me to come up with right now.

The financial strain does not end there. My brother and sister are in desperate need of clothing, shoes, and soon school supplies and other necessities. My younger sister also has a medical condition that requires ongoing appointments with her specialist in Madison. I have done everything possible to make sure she receives the care she needs, but the cost of fuel and the need for repairs on my vehicle have become overwhelming.

I am trying to stay strong for the children, but the past few months have been incredibly difficult. I am grieving the loss of my mother while adjusting to becoming the primary caregiver for three children. Without my mother, I no longer have the support system I once relied upon, and I have no other family members to turn to for help.

I am doing everything I can to keep my family together and provide stability for the children during this painful time.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and consider my request for assistance.

Dear Readers,

I can only imagine the courage it took for this young single mother to step forward during one of the most difficult moments in her life. Rather than allowing her younger brother and sister to enter an uncertain future, she opened her home to them. On that day she became more than an older sister, she became their protector, provider, and parent.

The grief of losing your mother is overwhelming on its own, but to suddenly face finding larger housing, providing food and clothing for two additional children, arranging medical

appointments, and navigating the complicated process of obtaining legal guardianship and financial assistance. Few people could carry that burden without feeling exhausted and overwhelmed.

Security deposits, rent, utility bills, groceries, and transportation costs cannot wait for paperwork to be processed. Families in transition often find themselves caught in the difficult space between qualifying for assistance and actually receiving it.

Grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, and other relatives who step in to raise children during family crises, often save children from entering foster care while receiving little support during the early months of that transition. They quietly absorb enormous financial and emotional responsibilities because to them their family comes first. Stability and consistency are more important than ever, and the efforts this young woman made to keep her family together will make a lasting difference in their lives.

After speaking with this woman and discovering even more details on their situation The Time Is Now to Help provided the necessary two months security deposit so the family can move into housing that is large enough for everyone. We also provided assistance toward groceries, clothing, household necessities, and the desperately needed car repairs and gas gift cards that will not only help provide reliable transportation for work but also to the sister's medical care in Madison.

While none of this can replace the loss of her and her sibling's mother, our hope is that it provides the family with some stability and breathing room as they move forward together.

I truly felt the woman's mother would be proud of the compassion, courage, and sacrifice she has shown during this difficult time. When I expressed this to the young woman she broke down in tears and she admitted she often felt her mother's presence during difficult times. She then expressed her overwhelming gratitude for what we were able to do for her family. It has made a world of difference in the success of their future as a family.

As our supporters have shown time and again over the past twenty-three years of publishing our column, ours is a community of caring individuals that come together when our fellow creations face difficult circumstances. Because of your generosity, lives are changed and futures look brighter.

Health & Happiness, Love & God Bless Everyone, Sal

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Memorials: The Tierney Family in memory of Joan Tierney.

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