

# Newborn baby found dumped in bin

**JAMEY GORDON**

The Somerset West police have opened an inquest and are following up on leads after a newborn baby was found dumped in a sanitary towel bin in a women's toilet at Somerset Mall on Friday (16 December).

According to a Somerset West police spokesperson, they have obtained CCTV footage from the shopping mall which will aid in the investigation.

Sergeant Suzan Jantjies says the discovery was made by a cleaner just before 09:00. The baby boy was found wrapped in a blanket.

In the light of the incident, founder of the Helderberg Baby Saver, Sandy Immelman, encouraged young mothers to make use of their services as a safer option of discarding an unwanted baby than a dustbin or a drain.

"Obviously first choice would be for a woman in a crisis pregnancy situation to know that she can get help from places like Choices, which would mean she would not find herself in such a desperate situation. We do not encourage people to "discard their babies", but if that is the intention, and the mother feels she has no alternatives, then we would urge her to make use of the Baby Saver in order to give her child a better chance of life, as we will immediately respond and take the baby to the local

hospital and contact adoption agencies, etc," explains Immelman.

The Baby Saver is a special safe built into the wall at the Choices Centre in Schapenberg Road, Somerset West, where mothers can place their unwanted baby. When a baby is placed in the safe, an alarm is triggered and an appointed respondent collects the baby.

The idea for the Baby Saver was initiated a year ago after two incidents of babies found abandoned in Somerset West. Baby Ayabonga was the first to benefit from the Baby Saver since its inception. Baby Amber was the first of the babies to inspire the facility. She was found by a homeless man and his dog next to the river in Andries Pretorius Street on 8 February 2014. In Ayabonga's case, the alarm was triggered at 15:00 on Tuesday 6 October when his mother, owing to her circumstances, placed the healthy one-month-old baby boy in the Baby Saver. The now 16-month-old was recently adopted and finds himself in the care of his delighted adoptive mother and father, who together with his enthusiastic two big sisters have opened their hearts and home to him.

According to Immelman, there have been no other babies who have benefitted from the Baby Saver since Ayabonga, although Choices did report a mother coming in with her baby as they were open at the time, so they were able to provide the necessary assistance and

support.

Immelman says mothers most likely to resort to dumping their babies are usually those who have concealed their pregnancies for some reason and have not been informed about their choices.

"I personally think that the babies found are often the result of illegal late-term abortions, and have little chance of survival due to being born prematurely out of a hospital environment. The illegal abortionists apparently tell desperate women that the medication they give them will "dissolve the baby". They go home thinking that everything has been taken care of, only to go into labour and give birth – by themselves, terrified – and then they panic.

"The Baby Saver would not be an option in these circumstances as there would be no chance of survival. If these women can, they should take the deceased baby to the nearest hospital and get help rather than trying to dispose of the body (concealment of birth will mean they could be arrested)," says Immelman.

Furthermore Immelman encourages anyone who is in touch with girls/women in communities at risk to contact her (082 494 0983) – "the more we spread the word, the more likely we are to save lives".

Find more information on the Helderberg Baby Saver on [www.babysaver.co.za](http://www.babysaver.co.za).