

# Family opens heart and home to Little "Ayabonga"

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Little "Ayabonga", the baby boy who was given a chance at life when his mother placed him in the Helderberg Baby Saver last year, was recently adopted.

"Ayabonga", the IsiXhosa name meaning "we are grateful" used to refer to him, is the first baby to benefit from the Baby Saver initiative since its inception more than two years ago.

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 after two recent incidents of babies found abandoned in Somerset West. 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



Little "Ayabonga", the one-month-old baby boy who was given a chance at life when his mother placed him in the Helderberg Baby Saver in October last year, was recently adopted into a loving home. The now 16-month-old is enjoying the attentions of his two big sisters.

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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

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support and counselling over months from specialist social workers, Ayabonga's mother bravely made her decision to release her little boy for adoption," said De Kock.

According to De Kock, "Ayabonga" now 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.

De Kock says his new parents expressed their appreciation to all involved, and especially to his birth mother, saying: "We are truly grateful for her selfless love and for wanting hope and a future for this precious boy."

"We applaud her for actively choosing life for her child, both in her initial approach to the Helderberg Baby Saver and in her subsequent decision to consent to his adoption. And, as always, we remain grateful for the way in which the Helderberg community rises as one when children are in crisis," said De Kock. Sandy Immelman, founder of the Helderberg Baby Saver, recalls being beyond elated when she learnt of the adoption.

"I was in tears, bawling," says an overjoyed Immelman. "We commend his mother for making the brave decision of not only placing her baby in the Baby Saver, but providing him a fair chance at life."

► *For more information on the Helderberg Baby Saver contact Immelman on 082 494 0983 or sandyimmanuelman@gmail.com, or visit the Helderberg Baby Saver's Facebook-page.*

elaborate extensively on Ayabonga's case. She did, however, say that the now 16-month-old is absolutely thriving.

De Kock says thanks to the collaborative efforts of three local organisations, Helderberg Baby Saver, Child Protection Organisation Wandisa and Wybrow-Oliver Attorneys, Ayabonga was welcomed into his new loving home.

"In a state of desperation, Ayabonga's birth mother had reached out to Helderberg Baby Saver: its response team was able to ensure that she and Ayabonga received immediate assistance and helped them access additional services. After

in the Baby Saver. Armed response officers of Secure Rite, paramedics and one of four responders, Amanda-Lee Jones of Patch, reacted to the incident. The seemingly content baby was found wrapped up in a blanket along with a nappy bag, his birth certificate, clean clothes, blankets and everything he could need. He was transported to Helderberg Hospital where he was later collected by Wandisa Adoption Agency and placed in the temporary care of a kangamom.

Rosemary de Kock, the adoption agency coordinator and social work case manager, told *DistrictMail* she could not