

# Baby Amber inspires locals to install 'Baby Saver' at Choices

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**A new initiative aimed at saving the lives of unwanted babies was launched in the Helderberg last week.**

The new Baby Saver, situated at Choices in Schapenberg Road, Somerset West was launched on Friday and consists of a special safe, built into the wall of the Choices building, where mothers can place their unwanted baby.

An alarm is triggered once a baby is placed in the safe and an appointed responder will then collect the baby. The idea for the Baby Saver was triggered by two incidents where babies were abandoned in Somerset West.

The first was Baby Amber who was found by a homeless man and his dog next to the river in Andries Pretorius on 8 February.

Judith Cross and her husband Tony rushed to the scene after hearing the news of an abandoned baby over the Somerset West Neighbourhood Watch radio. During the launch of the Baby Saver, Judith described how she took baby Amber in her arms and wrapped the newborn baby, who was still covered in amniotic fluid, in a picnic blanket. Amber was named after the ambulance that took her to hospital. After some time in hospital and then in the foster care system, Amber has



**Judith Cross and Sandy Immelman at the Baby Saver, which is installed at Choices in Somerset West.**

PHOTO: DALEEN FOUCHÉ

now been placed permanently with a family, said Marietjie Bezuidenhout a social worker who worked on baby Amber's case.

She said Amber is healthy and doing well. "She is meeting all her development milestones."

A week after baby Amber was found, another new born baby was found abandoned in a shopping trolley in the Somerset West CBD.

Sandy Immelman, one of the driving forces behind the Helderberg Baby Saver, says she wanted to create a safe place where abandoned babies could be left.

"I wanted to try and help prevent the dumping of babies in our area and the only way I could think of was to install a "baby safe". Judith and I met with various people and have

been overwhelmed by the positivity and involvement from the community."

Immelman acquired a second-hand baby safe and cleaned it, after which she started looking for a suitable location. The location needed to be accessible to the taxi ranks, the Main Road, N2 and the train station, she said.

Choices, the location of the Baby Saver, is a crisis pregnancy centre and provides counselling, advice and accommodation to pregnant woman.

Charmaine Etson, residential unit manager for Choice and trained Dulah, along with Immelman,

Cross and Mandy Jones from PATCH Helderberg Child Abuse Centre are the first respondents and will collect any babies that may be placed in the safe.

Securite has installed an alarm system and will also respond once the alarm is triggered, free of charge.

Immelman says the community's support for this project was overwhelming and every part of the project was sponsored by local companies and individuals.

According to Cross, the Helderberg Baby Saver is part of baby Amber's legacy. "Something good has come from this tragic event."

To watch a video demonstration of how the Baby Saver works, visit [www.districtmail.com](http://www.districtmail.com).