



## Publication

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# Yet another baby saved

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A beautiful, healthy baby girl prettily wrapped up and clearly deeply cared for is how Sandy Immelman, founder of the Helderberg Baby Saver, described the facility's latest arrival who was given a chance at life.

Its respondents were called to action when the alarm was triggered after a mother in crisis and out of evident desperation opted to relinquish her newborn responsibly by placing her into the special built-in safe designed to prevent child abandonment.

Last Thursday (3 March), the facility took to its Facebook page to share the "special news" and express gratitude for "Baby Ava" (which means "to breathe, to live"), the seventh infant to benefit from the baby saver since its inception eight years ago.

The baby saver was initiated following two incidents of baby abandonment in Somerset West. Baby Amber was the first of the babies to inspire the facility after she was found by a homeless man and his dog next to the river in Andries Pretorius Street on 8 February 2014. It is built into a wall at Choices Crisis Pregnancy Centre in Schapenberg Road and acts as a last port of call for help or hope, enabling safe abandonment of an unwanted baby; when a baby is placed in the safe, an alarm is triggered and appointed respondents, including security and emergency personnel, collect the infant. The response is linked with child protection organisations such as Wandisa, which sees to all the statutory processes, including placing the baby in temporary safe care, working with the courts, placing advertisements to try to connect with the mother to facilitate support, reintegration, or adoption if no-one comes forward after a 90-day period.

Mothers are guaranteed a safe, anonymous alternative to discarding their baby – no questions are asked and there are no cameras on site.

The Somerset West concept has been applied elsewhere in the Helderberg; the Macassar Baby Saver, launched in August



**GB Med Rescue paramedics attending to the little bundle who was safely relinquished via the Helderberg Baby Saver located at Choices Crisis Pregnancy Centre in Somerset West.**

2020, is located at 3 Musica Avenue.

In the recent incident, Immelman recalled the baby saver's alarm being triggered during the morning and receiving a call from Secure Rite Security armed response officers who alerted the appointed respondents. "Two responders who were on the scene in minutes opened the safe to find a baby of just a few days old in great health and well cared for," said Immelman.

"It serves as an indication that it must have been an immensely difficult decision made by an utterly desperate mommy. But we are just so glad she found the option of the baby saver and was able to use it, for the baby girl is safe with Wandisa Child Protection and Adoption Agency, which will take all the necessary steps to ensure she is cared for and the required legalities are in place.

"Yes, this is our seventh baby we have had through the saver, and we are overjoyed that this little bundle has been saved and given a chance at life."

One responder, who usually reacted when the saver's alarm was triggered falsely or after other responders were already on the scene, found herself first

in the queue this time. She related: "I was driving past the baby saver when I was called up by Sandy and the security company. I immediately did a bit of an illegal U-turn, but safely so, in Main Road, and chased after the security response cars, of which there were two on the scene.

"At that time I never once gave thought to where the baby came from, why the baby was there or who placed the baby in the saver. The only thing at the top of my mind is the baby's condition, safety and well-being. You have to kind of separate the beating of your heart from your head because there are so many emotions going through you and the adrenaline rush alone takes hours to settle down afterwards. My opinion is, if these baby savers were legalised as a safe alternative for the relinquishment of babies, then we would have more of these options available to moms and caregivers who are forced to give up their precious little ones owing to dire circumstances."

Immelman implored locals to support Baby Savers SA's petition for legalising baby savers. For more info to pledge support, visit [www.babysaverssa.co.za](http://www.babysaverssa.co.za).