

Helderberg Baby Saver



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The Helderberg Baby Saver is a safe place to leave an abandoned baby rather than dumping it in a bin or a river. Located at Choices Somerset West. ABOUT US The story of the Helderberg Baby Saver stems from when a Somerset West Neighbourhood Watcher, Judith Cross, was the first responder to the scene when Baby Amber was found, newly born and dumped next to the river in Somerset West, Western Cape, in early 2014. She was covered in ants and would have died fairly soon had the dog of some vagrants not sniffed her out, and they then immediately raised the alarm. A week later another abandoned baby was found in the SW CBD and this prompted Sandy Immelman to try and help prevent dumping of babies in the area by installing a Baby Saver. Sandy Immelman and Judith Cross approached Choices, who deal with crisis pregnancies in the Helderberg area, and got permission to build the Saver into their building. FAQ - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Is Helderberg Baby Saver necessary? Yes, unfortunately it is. Thousands of people are struggling to survive in the midst of poverty, unemployment, high rates of disease, the devastation of addiction, domestic abuse and broken families. One result is that newborn babies are literally being thrown away. Many women need support during their pregnancies and need the help of a counsellor or social

worker to talk through their options regarding their unborn child, but this is not always available. There is also no Safe Haven Law in South Africa so babies cannot be safely handed over at clinics or hospitals – with no questions, no blame. Where is the Helderberg Baby Saver, and are there cameras? The Helderberg Baby Saver is built into the wall on the right hand side of the Choices building on Schapenberg Road, Somerset West and there are no cameras. What happens when a baby is placed in the Baby Saver? Once a baby is placed in the Baby Saver and the door is closed, the door automatically locks keeping the baby safe. The Saver has been designed to detect a baby and once a newborn is placed inside, a signal is activated and responders are contacted, plus an armed response vehicle and an ambulance are dispatched. One of the local responders will then retrieve the baby. What happens next? The ambulance crew will check the baby immediately and then transport him/her to the local hospital, along with the responder. There the baby will have a medical check up and we will contact Wandisa, the Designated Child Protection Organisation with whom we work, who will then take statutory responsibility for the newborn, deal with legalities and find temporary safe care for the baby while assessing the best permanent option (such as adoption) for the little one. How can I adopt? We are not an adoption agency and therefore do not facilitate adoptions. All babies who come through the Helderberg Baby Saver are immediately referred to a Designated and Accredited Child Protection Organisation with specialisation in adoption. You should contact Wandisa directly if you would like to explore the possibility of being screened to be an adoptive parent (or temporary safe care or foster parent). Where can I get help? There are a number of options for women experiencing crisis pregnancies. – Choices Crisis Pregnancy Centre for Options Counselling (where the Baby Saver is situated in Somerset West): 021 852 6454 – Wandisa™ Specialist Adoption and Child Protection Organisation Tel: 021 852 8025 / info@wandisa.co.za – Call or message Open Arms SA – Tel: 084 488 1359

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