



**Safe Haven**  
Baby Boxes



## **Abandoned Baby Amelia Honored at Lawrence Fire Department Baby Box Blessing**

**LAWRENCE, INDIANA (DECEMBER 27, 2023)**- The front of the newly rebuilt Lawrence Fire Department now features a Safe Haven Baby Box. A blessing for the Baby Box is scheduled for Thursday December 28th at 11 AM EST. The Lawrence Baby Box is the 112th Baby Box in Indiana and the 191st in the U.S. Safe Haven Baby Boxes has had a record number of Baby Box surrenders in 2023 with 17 babies lovingly surrendered.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes fills the void in the Safe Haven movement as the only organization in the nation dedicated to providing an anonymous surrender option for mothers in crisis. The organization was founded in 2016 by Monica Kelsey who learned in adulthood she was abandoned as an infant. Now her life's mission is to end infant abandonment and advocate for the Safe Haven Law. In addition to educating citizens on the Safe Haven Law, Safe Haven Baby Boxes provides free confidential counseling via their hotline 1-866-99BABY1.

Kelsey explained, "We are ending this year honoring sweet Baby Amelia at our final blessing of 2023. Her life had value, she is a humbling reminder of why we work tirelessly to end infant abandonment. The stakes are high. We must protect women in crisis and their infants, we can do that by being prepared and that's what the Lawrence Fire Department has done. Their community will benefit from this additional measure of protection."

Baby Amelia was abandoned and found deceased December 18, 2014 in Indiana. Her legacy lives on in Safe Haven Baby Boxes' logo. Linda Znachko, Founder of He Knows Your Name adopted baby Amelia and shared, "We are finishing the 9th year since the finding of Amelia. Since her finding in 2014, no baby has been found deceased in the elements in Indiana. All the work Monica and I have been putting forward, that is educating and bringing awareness for the safe haven law is working. It is all in the name of Amelia and her legacy. I am her voice and carry her legacy."

A Baby Box allows for the legal, safe, and anonymous surrender of an infant provided under the Safe Haven Law. It features three silent alarms alerting first responders to the presence of a surrendered infant. The baby will be attended to within five minutes and taken to the hospital for medical evaluation. Adoption occurs within 30 to 45 days by families who are signed up for foster care with the intention to adopt.

Lawrence Fire Department's Baby Box has been in the works for quite some time. Midwest Remediation graciously paid for the cost of the installation of the Baby Box with an anonymous donor providing funding for the Baby Box along with the state. Bobby & Diane Cohron covered additional costs that were not covered by the previous donors.

Dino Batalis, Lawrence Fire Chief stated, "We are excited about having this box in the City of Lawrence, as this is the only box in Lawrence or on this side of Marion County."

The first Baby Box surrender occurred in 2017, since then 37 infants have been placed in a Baby Box. Nationwide, over 130 surrenders have resulted from calling the National Safe Haven Baby Box hotline. Safe Haven Baby Boxes are currently available in Indiana, Ohio, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Iowa, Missouri, West Virginia, and Mississippi.

**For any questions Monica Kelsey will be on site at this blessing. For more information please contact Monica at [monicakelsey@safehavenbabyboxes.com](mailto:monicakelsey@safehavenbabyboxes.com)**



# PROGRAM

## Abandoned Baby Amelia Honored at Lawrence Fire Department Baby Box Blessing

**WHAT:** Blessing of Lawrence Fire Baby Box

**WHERE:** Lawrence Fire located at 4450 McCoy Street Lawrence, IN 46226

**WHEN:** Thursday December 28th at 11 AM EST

**SPEAKERS INCLUDED:**

- Monica Kelsey, Safe Haven Baby Boxes Founder
- Dino Batalis, Fire Chief
- Steve Collier, Mayor
- Linda Znachko, He Knows Your Name Ministry
- Mel Keaton, Public Safety Chaplain with City of Lawrence

**SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS:**

[Safe Haven Baby Boxes Website](#)

[Safe Haven Baby Boxes Facebook](#)

[Safe Haven Baby Boxes Instagram](#)

[Safe Haven Baby Boxes Twitter](#)

[Safe Haven Baby Boxes TikTok](#)



# MEDIA TIP SHEET

## Abandoned Baby Amelia Honored at Lawrence Fire Department Baby Box Blessing

- The Safe Haven Baby Boxes organization is leading the nation by providing a safety net for mother's in crisis who are seeking to protect their infant and their identity. We know that anonymous surrender protects both mothers and their infants and prevents illegal abandonment. We are never sure when a Baby Box may need to be used but by providing the resource we are prepared to serve the vulnerable.
- Our organization offers a Safe Haven National Crisis Hotline (1-866-99BABY1) available 24/7/365. The hotline offers counseling services to a parent who is unable or unwilling to care for their newborn. If mothers in crisis are unsure of their state's Safe Haven Law our National Hotline can provide them with all the information they need to know to move forward if they are unable to parent.
- Baby Amelia's footprint is featured in Safe Haven Baby Boxes' logo in honor of her legacy. On December 28, 2014 Baby Amelia was found abandoned and deceased in Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis. She is the last infant found illegally abandoned and deceased in Indiana. Her footprint is motivation to ensure no more infants suffer the same fate due to abandonment.
- Safe Haven Baby Boxes are equipped with silent alarm systems to immediately notify 911 that there is a baby in the Safe Haven Baby Box. Safe Haven Baby Boxes feature climate control through heating and cooling features ensuring the infant will be comfortable. Once the infant is placed inside the Baby Box the exterior door locks until the first responders arrive within five minutes.



- Education is critical to the mission of Safe Haven Baby Boxes to end infant abandonment. Safe Haven Baby Boxes offers an educational training video for schools tailored to teach students about the Safe Haven Laws and what options are available. If your school is interested, please email us at [shbb@safehavenbabyboxes.com](mailto:shbb@safehavenbabyboxes.com).
- Safe Haven Baby Boxes educates citizens about the Safe Haven Law through social media. TikTok is a major platform for reaching youth and educating them on how our Baby Boxes work along with other resources our organization provides like our hotline.
- Newborns surrendered under the Safe Haven Law are placed with their forever families within 30-45 days. Babies like Ollie, who was a Safe Haven Baby Box baby, are blessed with a forever family thanks to a birth parent's brave decision to keep their child safe.



# Event Talking Points

## **1. Abandoned Baby Amelia Honored at Lawrence Fire Department Baby Box Blessing**

- Funding generously provided by state of Indiana and an anonymous donor
- Baby Box is located on the front of the building
- Midwest Remediation paid for installation of the Baby Box

## **2. The Safe Haven Baby Box is a final resource for women in crisis to ensure a safe surrender of an infant**

- SHBB's mission is to end infant abandonment by raising awareness of the Safe Haven law and by providing resources for a safe and legal surrender, including an anonymous surrender option with the Safe Haven Baby Box.
- The Safe Haven Baby Box organization staffs a 24-hour hotline (1-866-99BABY1) to give women the opportunity to talk to a trained professional as they consider options, including safely surrendering their baby.
- Some mothers need to protect their identity and we are prepared for that situation with our Safe Haven Baby Boxes. Their need is emphasized by illegal abandonments in public locations in hopes that the baby will be found in time. We don't want that risk to be made and to provide an alternative solution with our Baby Boxes that allow for anonymous surrenders.
- Safe Haven Baby Boxes save lives. Since 2017, 37 babies have been surrendered inside Safe Haven Baby Boxes. Nationwide, and over 130 surrenders have resulted from calls to the Safe Haven Baby Boxes national hotline.
- Seventeen surrenders have occurred via Baby Box so far in 2023.



### **3. The Safe Haven Baby Box is a double-down on the Safe Haven Law.**

- Babies are sadly abandoned. Baby Amelia's story is a tragic example of the reality for many abandoned infants. She is remembered through her footprint as seen in our logo and is on every Safe Haven Baby Box.
- The law is invisible and the Safe Haven Baby Box is a visual representation of the law. It's a crucial option for women in crisis. It is a key to protecting vulnerable women and their infants.
- This Safe Haven Baby Box is an opportunity for a mother in crisis to give her baby a better future and a loving family while legally protecting her identity. We have seen how a potential tragedy is shifted into an amazing story of an infant who was lovingly surrendered being placed with a family who eagerly awaited the opportunity to adopt a baby.



# **\*\*Internal Program\*\***

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- Mel Keaton, Public Safety Chaplain with City of Lawrence

### **BLESSING AND REMARKS:**

- Mel Keaton, Public Safety Chaplain with City of Lawrence

### **FINAL REMARKS:**

- Monica Kelsey, Safe Haven Baby Boxes Founder (unlock box)

