



PRESS RELEASE

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Carmel-Clay Fire Station 45 Installs Safe Haven Baby Box

CARMEL, IN – On December 28, 2018, a dedication ceremony and blessing were held at Douglas Callahan Carmel-Clay Township Fire Station 45, located at 10701 North College Avenue, for a Safe Haven Baby Box installed on the building’s north side. The box provides a safe and anonymous way for parents in crisis to surrender a newborn child. Once the infant is placed into the temperature controlled box, the door locks, and a silent alarm notifies emergency personnel that the baby is inside.

In 2000 Indiana passed a Safe Haven law to address infant abandonment. The law allowed custodial adults to leave an infant under the age of 45 days with emergency medical service providers. However, the required face-to-face interaction acted as a deterrent for some parents. Rather than handing the baby to qualified personnel, some continued to leave their infants at the doors of Safe Haven locations.

Safe Haven Baby Boxes founder Monica Kelsey learned about baby boxes while on a speaking tour in South Africa. She started her non-profit organization to design and manufacture the boxes in the United States. She also worked with a legislator to expand Indiana’s law to allow fire stations to accept surrendered infants anonymously via the locking box. Since the law passed, three babies have been left in Safe Haven Baby Boxes, and no infants have died from illegal abandonment in Indiana. Kelsey has a personal connection to issue as she was abandoned as an infant.

“This is an opportunity for the Carmel Fire Department to play a role in proactively saving the lives of children,” said Carmel Fire Chief David Haboush. “Far too many times firefighters have been called out to locate or resuscitate a newborn child who has been abandoned. . . . Today with the installation of this box, there is now a safe alternative for parents in crisis to leave a healthy newborn child.”

Clay Township provided the funding for the box and chose to install it at Station 45 due to its proximity to Interstate 465, Meridian Street/US 31, Keystone Parkway, Michigan Road, and the

many emergency rooms and hospitals in the area. A sign will be installed above the box inside the station that reads, "Everyone goes home." This same slogan is painted on the station's bay doors to remind firefighters of their duty to protect each other and the public they encounter on each run. "While we hope the box is never used, we are thankful for the resources and opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child," Haboush said.

Parents or expectant parents in crisis can call the 24-hour Safe Haven Hotline anonymously by calling 1-866-99Baby1.