



Hope's Cradle

**A GEMS FOR GEMS INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT
THE SAFE SURRENDER OF INFANTS**



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What is 'Hope's Cradle'?



Hope's Cradle is a collaborative initiative to support mothers in need and save infants from an unsafe abandonment.

This initiative has been made possible through the collaboration of *Gems for Gems*, a Calgary based charity focused on providing economic recovery and empowerment of survivors of domestic abuse, and *the Strathmore Fire Department*.

Both organizations have rallied the communities around them to make this resource available to women in Calgary and surrounding areas.

This cradle has been built in a fire station as opposed to the current Canadian choice of a hospital. The primary reason for this is the hospital(s) of interest to Gems for Gems for this first cradle were unable to take on the additional responsibility during the Covid- 19 pandemic. However, Alberta Health Services has been nothing but supportive and positive towards this initiative.

Although this first cradle is the result of the previously mentioned collaboration, Gems for Gems will scale and expand this resource as far and wide as possible. Gems for Gems is committed to doing all within its power to do just that.

‘HOPE’S CRADLE’

THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE NAME

The name, **‘Hope’s Cradle’** is one of 65 names given by the Gems for Gems Ambassador team to the board of directors to choose from for this project.

The board came back unanimously on the name **‘Hope’s Cradle’** ...



Hope's Cradle continued...

Baby Hope....

Baby Hope represents all babies who have been, and will be, born without a safe place to grow....

Without a safe place to have their first smile.... Their first giggles...

Without a safe place to crawl to... take their first steps...

Baby Hope represents precious newborns whose parents are unable to give them the life they deserve...

Hope's Cradle is a safe place to land...

A safe place for parents and guardians to place their baby without fear...

A safe place where their surrendered little baby will be given everything it was born deserving...

Hope's Cradle gives a new parent struggling to provide for their new baby, a safe place to surrender their baby.



Hope's Cradle continued...



The largest concerns with this initiative are...

1. Health and identity concerns for the child being unknown.
 - **Our Answer: Hope's Cradles will ALWAYS have envelopes with prepaid postage containing three forms.**
 1. **One will be a medical form to ensure we know all possible about the biological history.**
 2. **The other will be guided letter from guardian to the baby. This will not be enforced but highly encouraged.**
 3. **A list of local organizations and resources to help the mother through the next phase.**

2. This initiative will encourage more women to abandon their babies.
 - **Our Answer: Any mother who feels the need to utilize this initiative should have it available to both her and her baby. If the mother changes her mind, there is time and supports in place to do so.**

**The fact is that babies are being discarded in dumpsters, ditches, allies and more.
The child's right to a heartbeat supersedes all others.**

How does this work?



- ***The Mother's Experience...***

- The mother of the baby will come to a dark corner of the fire station with no lights or cameras thus ensuring her identity is firmly protected.
- She will open the box and see a bassinet with a piece of paper on it.
- She will place her baby in the bassinet and take the paper which lets her know of her rights, the way the box works etc.
- Once she closes the door, it will not reopen.
- The mother will have approximately 2 minutes to vacate before someone from the fire station who is trained in first aid is alerted to a baby being placed in the box and comes to collect the baby.

How does this work?



- ***The Baby's Experience***

- The baby will be placed in a bassinette within a temperature-controlled cradle.
- One door will face the outside world and the other will open to the fire station.
- Once the baby's mother closes the door, the baby will have approximately 2 minutes to wait before a trained first responder comes to collect him/her.
- The first responder will then follow the legal procedure determined by the province including a full physical and any medical procedures required and so on.

Background on this initiative...



- Baby 'boxes' (our organization will always be referring to them as 'cradles') are an anonymous/safe area, in a hospital or fire station, where infants can be surrendered.
- The concept of these cradles have been around since the early 20th century.
- Cradles are usually situated in a private area with external access to a hospital and/or fire station; when an infant has been placed inside, a silent alarm is triggered to alert staff.

Baby Boxes in the U.S.A



- Safe haven 'Baby Boxes' were founded by a woman who was abandoned herself as an infant. She founded Safe Haven Baby Boxes Inc. as well as its' associated crisis hotline and they now exist in most states.
- The hotline has received over 8000 calls to date.
- Safe Haven laws were first implemented in Texas in 1999 and it is from this law that the bay boxes received their name in the U.S.

Angel's Cradle



- Angel's Cradle began in Vancouver at St. Paul's Hospital in 2010
- Angel's Cradle operates under similar guidelines as its' counterpart in the U.S – it is accessible from the outside of the hospital, and allows for full anonymity of the person who surrenders the infant
- Angel's Cradle has been adopted at two hospitals in Edmonton, Alberta.
- These two locations are currently the only cradles outside of Hope's Cradle in Canada.

Canadian Laws Around Infant Abandonment

- While Canada does not currently have a nation-wide law regarding infant abandonment (such as the U.S has Safe Haven laws), the operating principles of the current are akin to those in the U.S.
- Any guardian who surrenders an infant to the Angel Cradle will be kept anonymous, provided the infant shows no signs of abuse.



Why do we need these laws?



- Safe Haven laws were implemented in order to decrease rates of infant homicide and abandonment.
- Infant homicide is the 13th leading cause of death among infants.
- Since implementation, the United States has seen a **66.7%** decline in infant homicide rates.
- Safe Havens offer an anonymous alternative to guardians who feel they have no other option than to abandon an infant – the goal here is to ensure survival.



4,382

This is the number of infants that have been safely surrendered worldwide since 1999.

This is 4,382 lives saved.

Who will utilize this resource?

In short, the answer is, anyone.



It is very easy to villainize a person who would abandon their baby. However, there is, like all situations, more to the story.

Below is a small sample of those who have previously abandoned unsafely and who we believe would likely choose the safe option, should it be accessible to them.

- Young girls who become pregnant and will face abandonment themselves if discovered.
- Victims of human trafficking who feel their baby is better off deceased than alive to experience what they believe will come their way.
- Women trapped in abusive relationships
- Rape victims



Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't parents just put their infants up for adoption?



Many mothers/guardians feel as if they have no other option or, are ashamed to be in the position of needing to surrender their child. Panic often sets in and decisions they may not have otherwise made happen.

Mothers are also not the only ones using the Safe Haven boxes - in many cases, pimps, fathers or other family members have been speculated to surrender the infant.

Can a parent reclaim their child?



In Canada, a safe surrender of the child enacts the same process as that of one who has been given to be placed for adoption.

As such, there will be 30 days given to the guardian to reclaim post surrender in Hope's Cradle.

Again, providing the baby was entirely unharmed.

Regardless of the outcome, the child would have spent this period in a **safe** environment and would not have been left to perish in an otherwise unsafe environment.

How many babies are abandoned per year?

There are a lack of statistics or data surrounding this question, however, this exposes a truly terrifying answer: **we don't know.**

What we do know is that mothers are carrying their babies to full or close to full term, usually giving birth unassisted and then abandoning them.

This is both **a tragedy and an opportunity** as the babies are viable to survive should another option be made.

For the vulnerable or at-risk mothers, this will provide a safe option for them, and their babies with full anonymity.



What Can We Do to Help?

- While there are options such as adoption or termination, it is our job to ensure that anybody who may feel that these options are not available to them, feel supported in the decision to surrender a baby
- We can do this by focusing our efforts on implementing similar systems to 'Safe Haven' in our own city, while spreading the word that this option exists and decreasing the stigma around surrendering.



Why Gems for Gems?



- Gems for Gems is a nimble organization founded on the belief that empowering women to empower themselves creates the opportunity for survivors create a sustainable, abuse free and economically sustainable future for themselves and their children.
- We believe most utilizing this opportunity will have had some form of abuse and are currently in an unsafe environment for their baby. However, much like our THRIVE program is designed for those who have suffered from abuse, it is also open to anyone in need of its messaging and resources.

We need your help!



- We are launching our first '**HOPE'S CRADLE**' in collaboration with a fire station just outside the Calgary city limits as these have been among the most utilized in the United States by all women due to a perception of increased anonymity.
- The specific fire station is committed to us and will be publicly announcing the partnership shortly.
- Each box costs approximately \$20,000 Cad. to build without including advertising costs.

***Gems for Gems is a well connected, highly visible public organization with an ambassador team 150 strong and celebrity support.

Through this reach the word will be spread thus maximizing marketing costs and efforts.*****

We believe every child has the right to live.

For us, the most important element of this project is that it gives life to those who wouldn't have otherwise survived.

Please consider supporting this initiative so we can reach everyone and end these tragic deaths.

To donate please go to www.gemsforgems.com or contact us at founder@gemsforgems.ca

