

Coral Gables news

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A Safe Haven gives newborns opportunity for loving family

BY MARTI BUESO

It started out as an uneventful Father's Day morning at a South Florida fire station, but that all changed when the doorbell rang. There stood a young woman looking exhausted and frightened. Her face was streaked with tears. She was holding something in her arms very tightly, wrapped in a nice blanket.

"I want to leave her in a Safe Haven," the young woman said.

"Are you sure?" the Firefighter asked.

"Yes, it is the only way. Please take good care of her," the woman replied.

She placed the baby in his arms, then turned and left.

For the past 13 years, the Gloria M. Silverio Foundation, "A Safe Haven for Newborns," a Florida 501(c)3, focused on saving unwanted newborns. They make sure mothers know they have options and can leave them with someone at a Safe Haven — any hospital, 24/7 staffed fire rescue station or staffed emergency medical service station — with no questions asked, totally anonymous and free from fear of prosecution. A Safe Haven saves the lives of newborns and also empowers mothers who are at a vulnerable time in their lives.

The organization now has a chance to reach more people and potentially save more lives as it completes a statewide public awareness campaign.



Little Gloria Hope Lewis now is part of a loving family.

Floridians will be seeing more billboards, public service announcements, media appearances and greater use of social media as Safe Haven heightens its information campaign by getting its message out to both the at-risk population and the community at large.

As of this writing, 213 newborns have been saved from the dangers of abandonment, and almost sure death. They are living in loving homes with their adoptive parents, reaching for the world.

Nick Silverio, the founder of A Safe Haven for Newborns, named this effort, in saving the lives of the most innocent and helpless among us, after his wife of 32 years, Gloria, who died

tragically in a car accident caused by a speeding driver in 1999. So, it wasn't a total coincidence that the baby, who was left at the fire station 11 years ago, was named Gloria Hope by the firefighters.

"A Safe Haven for Newborns is offered to everyone, but this public awareness effort will be focused on reaching young women across Florida who are hiding their pregnancy and are at risk of abandoning their unwanted newborn," Silverio said.

A Safe Haven has an updated website (www.asafehavenfornewborns.com) with impactful and compelling videos to show how you can make a difference.

It was redesigned to focus on:

- Providing help and being a resource to the girls/women we help before they reach the crisis stage.
- Increase Safe Haven education and public awareness throughout all 67 Florida counties.
- Encourage volunteer participation.
- Increase support in both the public and private sectors.

You can help by supporting the fourth annual "A Safe Haven Wonderland Gala" on Nov. 15 at Trump National Doral through sponsorships, program ads, tickets, auction items or donations in any amount. For more information visit Fourth Annual Safe Haven Wonderland Gala Sponsorships or Tickets page.