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Rory Glaeseman/The Journal News

Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone struggles around the track, far behind Catherine Rex, 9, during yesterday's Save-A-Baby Run at Lincoln High School.

Save-A-Baby Run puts spotlight on state statute

At Lincoln High, 40 circle track for cause

Glenn Blain
The Journal News

YONKERS — Richard Brand, 65, still makes it to the gym occasionally, so jogging a few laps around the Lincoln High School track is not a big deal, especially when it's for a good cause.

"It wasn't too hard," Brand said after he took part in the Westchester County leg of the Save-A-Baby Run. "It's important to come out and do whatever you can do for such a wonderful cause."

Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone, 57, agreed, though he admittedly had a tougher time with the jogging. The mayor, in a sport coat and slacks, jogged halfway around the track before giving up.

"I was going to run the whole way, but I thought nobody would want to see a grown man cry," Amicone said after he'd had a few minutes to catch his breath. "This is just proof that I need to start working out."

The "Save-A-Baby Run" was intended to raise awareness about the state's "safe haven" law, which allows parents or guardians to leave a newborn — 5 days old or younger — at a suitable place, such as a hospital, police station or firehouse without criminal penalties. The run, a series of miniruns taking place between New York City and Albany, began Friday and will end Tuesday on

the steps of the state capital.

Organizers of Westchester's leg said the arrest in Yorktown last week of Krishnia Schiaffino, 30, on charges of abandoning her newborn baby on a neighbor's doorstep shows the need for more education about the law. The baby was left on the doorstep wearing a knit cap and pants and with a note asking whoever found the baby boy to take him to a hospital.

The baby has since been released from the hospital and is in the care of the Westchester County Department of Social Services.

"If this girl had known, she could have gone to a fire station and dropped the baby off and she would not be under arrest," said Charles Rex, who organized the run with his wife, Elizabeth.

Amicone pointed to a January incident in which a distraught mother left a newborn baby boy at a city firehouse as proof that the law works. Firefighters assumed custody of the baby without asking questions of the mother.

"It makes so much sense for women who don't know what to do, who can't afford to have their child," Amicone said.

Yesterday's race attracted about 40 walkers and runners, although the bulk of the running was handled by a contingent of about a dozen members of the Lincoln girls softball team. The girls totaled 40 laps or 10 miles.

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