

# *Confidentiality and Privacy*

There are many reasons to maintain the privacy of the refugee newcomer families. Some are related to common sense, others to the law in Canada.

A basic guideline will be to envision how you would like to have your privacy and the confidentiality of your situation and that of your family ensured. Add to that the needs of refugee families who have been traumatized and are now in a society and a context that they do not know or may not understand. The trust that you are able to develop with refugee newcomers will depend to a great extent on how well they perceive that you guard their privacy and safety.

## **Some basic do's:**

- ▶ Telephone first or make an appointment before going over to the refugees' homes. This is common practice in Canada. It also allows refugee newcomers to know that their home is theirs.
- ▶ Wait for an invitation to enter their homes.
- ▶ Take down information on those wishing to contact the family and then relay that information to the refugees and help them make the connection if they wish to do so.
- ▶ Discussion within the sponsorship group around practical aspects of settlement is important but those matters that are very personal should be discussed on a *need to know* basis among those who are directly involved in providing support. Avoid *gossip*.
- ▶ Provide protection from media attention by acting as a mediator and determining the interest of the refugees in responding to media interest.
- ▶ In accessing support from settlement agencies and other community organizations, act as a liaison to connect the refugee newcomers directly with the support service.

## **Some don'ts:**

- ▶ Do not publish, promote or distribute to anyone or any organization the names, address and telephone number of any member of the refugee families without their specific permission.
- ▶ Do not discuss their private and personal affairs with any individual or any member of an organization without their permission. This includes discussion with other members of the sponsorship group and with settlement organizations.
- ▶ Do not talk *around* the refugee newcomers with others when they are present unless the refugees are directly involved in the dialogue.
- ▶ Do not expect agencies and organizations to keep you completely informed on their work with the refugee newcomers. They are bound by privacy legislation.