

Rehab El-Buri is a Muslim activist with an American mind



Rehab El-Buri and her mother, Fadiah Corban Ali, speak in Arabic with a friend of the family, Wafa Sharafi, at their home in Columbia.

VEIL OF WILLPOWER

The sun is up, but it bites cold on a Sunday afternoon. In the playground behind the mosque, Rehab El-Buri shares a table with five junior high girls. They all wear hijabs, scarves covering their head, with colors ranging from white to dark blue to black. Rehab, a junior at MU, supervises the girls every week — it's a chance for local Muslim teens to spend a couple of hours together. Rehab is wearing a green long-sleeved dress, white hijab and sunglasses. Brown, short-heeled boots peek from under her dress.

The girls discuss a couple of articles that make references to young Muslim women — one about the ban of hijabs in French schools, the other about a post-9/11 trend for American Muslim women to veil themselves. The girls are excited, which Rehab uses to teach a lesson in civic involvement. Let's write a letter to the editor, she says.

As they compose their letters, the girls munch on pink-topped cupcakes. Their small purses lie on the table. Their feet scrape the wood chips that pave the play-



Rehab asks members of her youth group if they would be interested in taking a course to become certified baby sitters. Rehab mentors the girls and meets with them on Sundays for social activities and fundraising. Though most of the meetings are purely social, Rehab says she tries to work in greater lessons for the teens.

ground, and they giggle constantly. They have never written a letter to the editor. "I am an American Muslim teen," reads the first sentence of the first draft.

"It's like a movie review, but an article review," concludes one.

They discuss political preference. "Can we bring it back to where I thought >>>

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