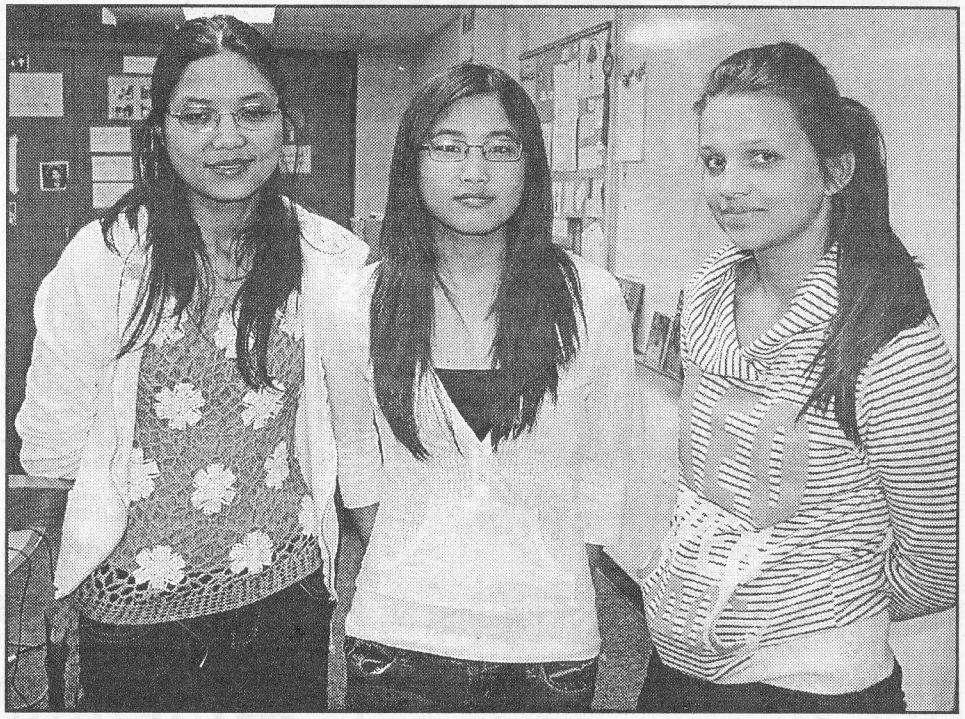
Hilton ESL students' writing to be included in anthology, "Everybody Has a Story"

Three Hilton High School juniors, Khin Shwe, Fom Tin Tial, and Natasha Voronina, will have their writing included in a new anthology, "Everybody Has a Story," published by the Rochester Area Literacy Council. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL) teacher at Hilton High School Michelle Kirchgraber-Newton said, "The students were inspired by Langston Hughes' poem "Mother to Son." After studying the poem, they decided to write their own poems and letters to their future children, telling their stories and how they have survived adversity at such a young age. These poems and prose will also be included in an ESL class project of student memoirs, to be compiled and printed in June. This is a great accomplishment for these students. The two students from Burma had only been in the USA for two-and-a-half years when they wrote the poem and prose, and Natasha came to the United States when she was 11 years old."

"The writing I did is about not forgetting who you are, your culture, your home," Khin Shwe said. Khin and Fom are sisters from a remote region of Myanmar (Burma). Natasha, one of 11 children, is from the Ukraine. There are students from the Yemen, China and the Philippines also in Newton's class in Hilton. Improving literacy is the goal of our community and of the Rochester Area Literacy Council (RALC). For the second year, RALC has collected and published the writing and art from students in Rochester and the surrounding area. This year the project, "Everybody Has a Story," includes two books; one showcasing the work of students in kindergarten through sixth grade and the second edition which highlights the work of students in grades 7-12, representing the work of about 100 area students.

In addition, English Language Arts teacher Melanie Krebs served as a reader for the secondary book project. "The Council is a professional organization dedicated to strengthening literacy and literacy instruction in our community," Krebs said. "The Student Publishing Project is a way for RALC to foster writing and art and to allow students the opportunity to share their work with a broader audience. Each student whose work was published will be honored at a special book celebration and also received a copy of the book compliments of the Rochester Area Literacy Council. RALC is currently planning for the 2011-2012 book offering which will be entitled "Storytellers All: Voices and Visuals from Rochester Area Students." Students in grades kindergarten through 12 are invited to submit their stories and visuals for review," Newton said.

Provided information.



Shown (l to r) **Khin Shwe, Fom Tin Tial** and **Natasha Voronina** from Hilton High School's ESL program, will have their writing included in a soon-to-be published anthology. Provided photo.

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