

MGH Institute of Health Professions to Help Local Students in Reading and Literacy

The Boston graduate school's Speech and Language Literacy (SAiL) Lab will use grant from accounting firm RSM to work at Harvard-Kent Elementary School.

BOSTON, MA, USA, January 16, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A grant received by [MGH Institute of Health Professions](#) from the Charlestown office of accounting firm RSM will leverage the graduate school's literacy expertise and research to help provide children at Harvard-Kent Elementary School with the support and resources to succeed in school and in life.

Dr. Tiffany Hogan, director of the MGH Institute's [Speech and Language Literacy \(SAiL\) Lab](#), and post-doctoral fellow Dr. Rouzana Komesidou will lead a three-year grant to implement a long-term initiative at the Charlestown public school with one of the highest rates of economically disadvantaged students and one of the highest rates of English learners in Boston.



L-R: Patrick O'Neill of RSM, MGH Institute President Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Institute speech-language pathology students Elise Hopkins Gallegos & Alexandra Hanson, MGH Institute Chief Development Officer Clare McCully, and Erinn Johnson of RSM.

“We are currently on the threshold of a paradigm shift on how we approach issues around effectiveness in literacy instruction and emphasis on local sustainability and community buy-in,” Hogan and Komesidou wrote in the grant application. “This program has not only the potential to improve literacy outcomes in struggling readers but also create a sustainable model that will increase literacy awareness among students, their families, and the Charlestown community.”

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MGH Institute President Paula Milone-Nuzzo

The first \$180,000 of the \$300,000 grant was presented to the Institute during a January 9 event at RSM's Charlestown office. Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Chris MacKenzie, RSM's market leader, spoke about the importance of local businesses giving back to the community, and cited how partnerships such as the one with MGH Institute, RSM, and

Harvard-Kent can play a significant role in residents' lives. “This is an investment in people many of you probably will never meet, but because of this will go on to do great things,” said Mayor Walsh.

Hogan and her team will first identify students in grades K-2 at risk for poor learning outcomes and then administer additional diagnostic assessments of reading, language, and cognition to better characterize these students' abilities. Graduate students in the Institute's speech-language pathology program will then provide small-group evidence-based interventions for word decoding (matching sounds with letters) and language comprehension (background knowledge, grammar, and vocabulary) after school. Data collected through observations, interviews, focus groups, and document review will be used to help strengthen how reading and literacy issues are addressed with Harvard-Kent children in all grades.

For MGH Institute President Dr. Paula Milone-Nuzzo, the reading initiative is the latest example of the growing partnership with Harvard-Kent. Over the past two years, hundreds of graduate students from all the Institute's programs have spent thousands of hours working with the public school's children, not just on reading and literacy but cooking (occupational therapy), fitness (physical therapy), and health and wellness (nursing and physician assistant studies). Institute faculty also have presented mindfulness techniques to both children and teachers.

"This is a shining example of how corporate dollars given to a graduate school with the expertise to assist children in need in the local elementary school is more than a win/win," she told the audience. "We hope this can be a model for other relationships that can develop that will ultimately improve our city."

About MGH Institute of Health Professions

Approximately 1,600 students at the Boston graduate school's Charlestown Navy Yard campus learn and collaborate in interprofessional teams across disciplines as they pursue post-baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees in genetic counseling, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, speech-language pathology, health professions education, and rehabilitation sciences.

The MGH Institute is the only degree-granting affiliate of Partners HealthCare, New England's largest health provider. It has educated more than 8,200 graduates since its 1977 founding. It is fully accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education. Several programs are highly ranked by U.S. News & World Report. For the past ten years, the IHP has been named a "Great College to Work For."

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