PRESS RELEASE
EMPATHYLAB ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF ANNUAL EMPATHY DAY, AND INVITES PUBLISHER SUBMISSIONS FOR A READ FOR EMPATHY GUIDE

London, UK, 23 October 2017: After a highly successful 2017 pilot, EmpathyLab has announced that Empathy Day will now be annual every June. In 2018, it is on 12 June. In the build-up, A Read for Empathy Guide and book collection will be created, in partnership with Peters. Submissions from publishers using the official guidelines are now welcome.

New scientific evidence shows the power of reading to build real-life empathy skills. Empathy Day will have a major focus on using books – and talking about them - as a tool to help people understand each other better.

Founder Miranda McKearney OBE says: “We believe empathy is a much-needed force for connection and understanding in a divided world, a beacon of hope. It is also one of the most crucial of the social and emotional skills children need to thrive. We want Empathy Day to be a galvanising focal point for us all.

“As a new not-for-profit organisation, it’s fantastic to be at a stage to invite the book trade to help us embed Empathy Day as an annual event, and launch the Read for Empathy Guide and book collection. We are thrilled to be developing this in a new partnership with Peters.”

Read for Empathy book submissions – deadline 17 November
The Read for Empathy Guide will be available from February for parents and teachers of 4-11 year olds, with a linked book collection of 30 fantastic contemporary empathy-boosting books. Publishers are invited to submit books by 17 November, using the guidelines at http://empathylab.uk/peters-partnership

The guide will be developed with Peters. MD Ray Dyer says, “It’s been wonderful to see EmpathyLab burst onto the scene, with its timely drive for a world with more empathy. We’re excited to be working together to get more empathy-boosting books into children’s hands.”

A distinguished Selection Panel will choose the 30 books:
Chair: Miranda McKearney OBE, founder of EmpathyLab and The Reading Agency
Farrah Serroukh, Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
Jon Biddle, Moorlands Primary Academy and Patron of Reading
Nicolette Jones, Sunday Times Children’s Book Reviewer
Emma O’Donovan, The Booksniffer
Tricia Adams, CEO School Library Association
Sarah Mears, Essex Library Service; EmpathyLab co-founder

Other book trade opportunities
EmpathyLab is also inviting the book trade to mount author events and workplace activities on 12 June, and to join in a social-media #ReadForEmpathy campaign which will provoke a mass crowd-sharing of empathy book recommendations. In the pilot 2017 campaign, this trended on Twitter in the UK throughout the day.

Library developments
EmpathyLab will be working with four library services on a new Empathy Cafes project. Children’s authors will run workshops inspiring library staff and families to create empathy-focused activities to share with their communities on Empathy Day. This is part of the Engaging Libraries pilot programme co-funded by Carnegie UK Trust and Wellcome. The library services involved are Essex, Sheffield, St Helens and Libraries UnLtd (Devon).

For more information on this and wider EmpathyLab plans, contact miranda@empathylab.uk 07500 010740