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PRESS RELEASE

Graham Norton Opens National Library Exhibition

Broadcaster and comedian Graham Norton officially opened the exhibition ***Discover Lifelines*** at the National Library of Ireland today Thursday (February 4th, 2010) marking the 25th anniversary of the *Lifelines* project at Wesley College, Dublin which has raised over €100,000 for Concern and the developing world.

Discover Lifelines: letters from famous people about their favourite poems reveals the thoughts and poetic choices of a wide variety of people from government ministers to priests, poets, activists and actors including Margaret Atwood, John Banville, Sebastian Barry, Maeve Binchy, George Hook, Dermot Bolger, Richard Dawkins, Judi Dench, Dermot Desmond, Roddy Doyle, Margaret Drabble, Garret FitzGerald, Roy Foster, Sir John Gielgud, Seamus Heaney, Jeremy Irons, John B Keane, Brendan Kennelly, Marian Keyes, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Graham Norton, Joseph O'Connor, Tom Stoppard, Mother Teresa, William Trevor and many others. The exhibition shows people's belief in poetry and how in its unique and quiet way, poetry endures and enriches lives.

Lifelines began in a classroom in Wesley College in 1985 and first saw the light of day as a little Gestetnered stapled booklet. Three other booklets followed and their sell-out success resulted in the book *Lifelines*, published in 1992, *Lifelines 2* appeared in 1994 and *Lifelines 3* in 1997. The *Lifelines* anthologies include contributions from five Nobel Laureates and the project was much praised: Iris Murdoch described it as 'such an excellent project and such good reading', and Graham Norton noted: 'Finally, a book that puts poetry in the "loved-it" pile, rather than the "must-get-around-to-reading" pile.' A selection from *Lifelines* was published by Penguin in 1993, and a further volume, a New and Collected edition, published by Townhouse in 2006. Unusually for a poetry book, Lifelines featured prominently in the Best-Seller lists.

All correspondence, photographs and other related archive material relating to *Lifelines* was donated to the National Library of Ireland by Wesley College and today, replies from over 650 people who responded to the pupils' appeals are preserved in the Library. Discover Lifelines is available as a travelling exhibition for schools, libraries and other venues nationwide.

Graham Norton will be interviewed on Friday, February 5th, 2010 on *Today with Pat Kenny*, RTÉ Radio 1. **Discover Lifelines**, National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Admission Free. *Lifelines New and Collected* available from the National Library shop (€12) . See www.nli.ie for further information.

February 4th, 2010

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