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Literary agent and writer, Gaby Naher, has won the 2010 Sydney PEN Award.

The Sydney PEN Award is presented annually to an individual who has worked especially hard to promote the Sydney PEN Centre's values and the PEN Charter. The winner is nominated and voted by Sydney PEN's management committee, and made possible by the generosity of Sydney PEN member Jane Morgan with the support of Mr Charles Wolf at The Pen Shop, Sydney. In previous years the Sydney PEN Award has recognised Chip Rolley, Nicholas Jose, Rosie Scott and Denise Leith.

Gaby is author of the novels *The Underwharf* and *Bathing in Light* and the memoirs *The Truth About My Fathers* and *Wrestling the Dragon: In Search Of The Boy Lama Who Defied China*.

In 2008 she established the Naher Agency. It is testament to her gift for working with writers that within two years of starting, the authors on her books include such high-calibre names as Peter Corris, Linda Jaivin, Gillian Mears and Mandy Sayer, as well as newcomers such as Clint Caward and Tess Evans.

Gaby's interest in human rights advocacy may have its roots in her brief period of working with the Dalai Lama, as a book publicist on his autobiography, in the early 1990s.

In 2004, on the release of *Wrestling the Dragon*, Suzy Baldwin wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "Impressed as she was with the Dalai Lama when she ran his press conference, the real turning point was the Tibetans lining the road as he left. They chanted prayers as he passed and wailed, grief-stricken, when he'd gone. She was so struck by the pain of their separation - from their country, brutally occupied by China since 1950, and their leader, in exile in India since 1959 - that she resolved to take on some of their struggle."

Wrestling the Dragon tells the story of Tibet's 17th Karmapa, a possible successor to the present Dalai Lama. Gaby's passion for the cause of the Tibetan people led her to volunteer for the Tibet Council of Australia, spending six years on its board, several as chair.

Gaby joined the Sydney PEN management committee in 2008 and immediately volunteered to lead the Writers in Prison committee.

Sydney PEN president at that time, Virginia Lloyd, says Gaby's arrival in the position immediately revitalised the group's commitment.

"Gaby brought energy, focus, and leadership to a critical part of Sydney PEN's activities, motivating and encouraging PEN supporters to write letters, actively lobbying the Australian Government on behalf of detained writers in China and Burma, and most importantly putting Sydney PEN on the political radar in Canberra," said Virginia.

Between the demands not only of establishing a new business but also parenting two small children, during her time as WIP committee chair Gaby arranged meetings with diplomatic staff in Canberra and established important connections with ambassadorial representatives, particularly in Burma and China.

In May 2009 at her suggestion Sydney PEN made Burmese poet, monk, comedian and activist Zargana an Honorary Member, and through Gaby the Writers in Prison Committee

established direct contact with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade about this writer. This prompted Australia's ambassador to Burma/Myanmar to take a personal, ongoing and active interest in his case.

As part of the 2009 Sydney Writers Festival empty chair campaign, once again at Gaby's instigation, festival-goers signed hundreds of letters about PEN's imprisoned writers to be forwarded to the relevant ambassadors, bringing into potent focus the plight of writers in prison in the Asia-Pacific region.

Current president of PEN, Bonny Cassidy, says this intensification of the organisation's regional focus remains one of Gaby's major contributions.

"There are so many cases that PEN International confirms and updates that it is imperative for a very active centre like Sydney to find a productive point of focus among them. Gaby established regular communication between PEN and the diplomats of our region, specifically Ambassador Geoff Raby in China and Ambassador to Burma, Michelle Chan," she said.

Gaby stepped down as Writers in Prison chair in February this year, leaving a vibrant model of effective advocacy work for those coming after her.

Sydney PEN thanks Gaby Naher for her compassion, drive and purposeful commitment to the human rights of imprisoned writers throughout the world, and especially in our region.

The 2010 Sydney PEN Award was presented to Gaby at the Day of the Imprisoned Writer.