

Testimonial to Latha Ravikumar, Conservation Administrator, 20 Years Anniversary



Young ZOO...young everybody early 1996

Testimonial from Sally Walker

When Zoo Outreach Organisation was still a very young operation, we decided we needed an accountant, and one of our colleagues from Pricol, Raveendran, in Coimbatore brought a very young and shy lady to us, accompanied by her mother. Latha was very lately out of college, having studied BSc. (Maths) and Diploma course in Computer Science and graduated from CBM College in 1990. I hardly remember what I thought about Latha at the time but I must have thought she was ok because I hired her. She had problem with my accent in the starting but she improved soon with the help of Sanjay and other staff.

As time went on, Latha was not only doing accounts, but had taken on a number of additional responsibilities. She was a very good typist and organizer. She was (and is) a good manager and began taking on more and more of the tasks around the office. She takes care of administration and organisation legalities very well. Whenever there was something that needed doing in our locality, she was on it, and could convince people to do whatever was in our interests. Noting this quality, I often sent Latha with Sanjay, who is also very good with people to make up a team to speak on ZOO's behalf.

Latha came to us when we were in our 2nd office in Bharathi Colony. We've had to move a lot, either because rent became too high or because our house owner wanted to use the space for some other purpose. Latha would take someone from the office and scout the places, a job I could never do, and also find a broker to help. She would bargain

with the owners for lower rent and tell them probably exaggerated stories about her boss's achievements and sacrifices and our organizations noble purpose. She would manage shifting seamlessly without affecting daily routine work.

Latha has been helpful to me personally in many ways over the years and particularly when I began staying in USA longer and longer to give more time to my parents who were aged and mostly bedridden. For that matter, Sanjay and my whole office took on greater burdens during that time and were very kind cooperative.

I was in Vietnam attending a conference when my mother took a bad turn. I had planned to attend and return to my home very shortly but I got the news from my father that she was very bad off and he requested me to come immediately. I called Latha and she immediately changed my flights to the earliest possible. On the way I got an email on my Blackberry that my Mother had passed away. When I reached India to get my flight for USA, Latha and her husband Ravi had driven all the way from Coimbatore to Chennai, over 12 hours, to comfort me. They also brought some things I needed to take to USA and take extraneous thing back to Coimbatore. I was distraught and crying, and Latha got upset just being with me and seeing my miserable condition. She and her family were so kind and loving. They would not even stay in Chennai but drove back the same night.



Most recent group photo at 9A Lal Bahadur Colony on Dec'10

A few months later, I asked Latha if it was possible to arrange a Hindu ceremony for my mother at a nearby temple with a river and she made all arrangements ... it was as traditional as we could make it. My whole office staff accompanied me and stayed through the whole service.

Then my father was alone; no relatives live nearby or could spare themselves for taking care of him. He was distraught with the loss of my mother. He developed pneumonia and had to go to a rehabilitation hospital to recuperate. I used that opportunity to go to India and organize myself to stay longer periods in USA. During that time Sanjay was doing his field research for Ph.D. and I would tell my staff to fill in for him and for me in any way possible. Latha took on a lot for us both and encouraged our staff.

Latha is much more than an employee. She is a close personal friend and I confide a lot in her. I am confident that she will never break my confidence. She has enhanced my ability to work by taking on jobs I should do but don't have to because of her.

I'd like to honour Latha's family also. Although Sanjay and I both chide her for working late every night, somehow she is always the last to leave. If we need something very badly, she stays to get it done, or to get a jump on the next day. We have no heart to ask her for most of these things. We are afraid (rightfully) that she is neglecting her family. Somehow her family has understood the meaning and purpose she has acquired by being such an important part of Zoo Outreach Organisation, and they take on much of her domestic work. Her father and husband tease her unmercifully about her dedication to me and to ZOO, often commenting when she reaches home at 8pm or later, "oh, you must have got sacked! You are home early!"



Latha & staff at Vada party on 18 Mar 2010

I wish that Latha always finds her job at ZOO meaningful and rewarding. She could get a better job any time and if she went out on her own she could make a fortune, as she is a very talented businesswoman. Happy Anniversary Latha and thank you for your two decades at ZOO.

Love

Sally Walker

Founder/Director, Zoo Outreach Organisation

Testimonial from Sanjay Molur

When I first contacted Sally regarding the possibilities of working at ZOO, I was called for an interview and to see the ZOO office. That was when I met Latha. She was very calm, quiet and demure looking in the early part of the day. I continued to stay on that day and had officially joined ZOO and by evening, I realized that Latha was not as she had appeared on first acquaintance. The real Latha she talkative, a busy bee and matronly amidst all her various duties of typing (my, what speed!), phoning, faxing and photocopying. Within the day I realized that the office would not be a silent place to work in.

She was Acting Manager in her additional capacity, as the Office Manager was away on a field trip. She amazed both Sally and me then with her ability to juggle all these things and ensure their completion. Even in those days when the workload was not as high as it is today, Latha was the only other person in the office with Sally and me working late in



Bat CAMP in Madurai on 23 January 2002

the evening. She had standing instructions for her brothers to pick her up after 6PM, which slowly got extended to 6.30 and 7. There were evenings when one of her brothers would go back home without her after making two or three trips. Hats off to their patience. And as we were preparing for the different PHVAs, I used to drop her home on the near-broken office TVS50 moped around 9 or 10PM. Although this did not become the norm then, she did start leaving later in the evening and coming early in the mornings.

Her perseverance, interest, dedication and inquisitive nature played a huge role in her rise in the office from a typist to assuming larger responsibilities such as a manager and eventually become the Finance Director of ZOO. Amongst her abilities are accounting, typesetting, data storing, web building, internet querying, supervising and managing. She has learned on the job and has mastered scientific names from different groups, interprets scientific data with confidence, creates educational packets, mixes and matches in-house productions to suit different purposes, needs and moods, mastered Photoshop, CorelDraw, PageMaker, InDesign, Microsoft Office suite, web building tools, Windows OS and now Mac OS. She is an expert on FCRA regulations in India. And, is generally a pain-in-the-butt for

incompetent service people, bad service providers, and the occasional erring or demanding government servant.

Latha and I have had a near 18-year working relationship and have been through bouts of good, bad and occasionally very bad interactions. Every one of them has been memorable and have all resulted in a special bond between us. ZOO and WILD, SAZARC and the many networks would not be what they are without Latha. She is rising steadily to become the office 'amma' and I look forward to a continued interaction with her in ZOO.

Sanjay Molur
Executive Director, ZOO

Testimonial from Manoj Mishra

It is easy to build a team. But to keep it together and bind it like a 'family' needs some one like Latha. ZOO and Sally has been 'damn' lucky to have their Latha and the great results are there to see. Many congratulations to Latha on completing 20 glorious years at the ZOO and helping it become one of the finest NGOs in the land.

Best wishes,
Manoj Misra
Executive Director
PEACE Institute, New Delhi



Latha & family on 11 August 2008

Testimonial from Ravi Chandran

Latha is a good friend of mine, is a very smart and is very competitive in nature. She is a good well wisher, advisor, teacher and very down to earth. She really likes the work that is the reason that she is still working in ZOO!. She proves herself up to be strong and rise up to the situation that is presented to her. Strong willed, helpful and determined that's the 3 adjectives that I remember her by the most. She always give a try when others lose their hopes and succeeded most of the time. She has helped me in lots of work and taught me many programs in computer. A financial help during my wedding and advises whenever needs are much appreciated. I take this opportunity to give my heartfelt thanks and express good wishes and congratulations to her.

Best regards,
Ravi Chandran
Editorial Assistant, ZOO

Testimonial from Radhika

Heartly congratulations for Latha on her 20th anniversary with zoo crew. She had been and worked every minute for zoo these days whether she is in or out of office with full energy. The backbone she had formed before above fifteen years is what helping us to work ease. What hard work she



Latha & Sarita at SAZARC dinner in Ahmedabad 2 Feb 2008

would have fetched forming those infrastructure? Amazing! She is such a powerful administrator who turns everything possible. Her strictness had always trained us to develop our skills and gain knowledge. Zoo has always been her first family and she loves everyone here as her relation. Timeless hard work and her commitment had been proved her as a master.

The pressure she takes to maintain every work in order is great and her expectation of perfection in every deal has doubtlessly brought boons to zoo. Worried where she gets time to look into her family, but also does that without any problem and she's gifted with such a family who had clearly understood her. No one could deny her support officially and personally which had helped them to happily work with our concern Her portion of work in forming societies, carrying government oriented duties, IT regulations could never be substituted by any others. Her keenness in looking and training other in all fields seeing zoo should work hassle free missing anyone shows her selflessness. She had been madam's strength all these years and will always be. We wish and prey these golden period we had all these days will last life through and latha have all success and celebrate many more such anniversaries with Zoo. Happy being one amongst the crew.

Love
Radhika Suresh
Accounts cum Admin Executive, ZOO

Testimonial from Daniel

A smiling face, dealing difficult situations with a high level of confidence and happiness are the trademarks of Latha. I have never hesitated to get Latha's assistance at any time, either official or personal, whenever needed. She acts



Serious party time - 1998 New Year's party

swiftly when she realizes that someone needs help. I remember an incident that occurred some years ago when I reached Kolkatta after an international flight. My plan was to go to Guwahati to meet a government official to discuss about a series of workshop that we were planning in Assam. After landing Kolkatta I realized that the connecting domestic flight had been cancelled and I was really concerned that I might miss the appointment. I called Latha immediately and she managed to get an alternate flight within 10 minutes. I have so many similar experiences with Latha.

Latha coordinates most of the travel during workshops or conferences. Many a times the delegates are amazed about the way they get their problems solved. They never forget to enquire about Latha or thank her for making the job easy for them. She is dependable and trust worthy. She is gifted with amazing recall memory.

Regards

**B.A. Daniel,
Scientist, ZOO**

Testimonial from Raveendran

Latha Madam has been working last twenty years at the ZOO. Even though I personally knew her for two and half decades, but I didn't know about ZOO. In an unexpected situation I joined ZOO, after that I understood more about the office and staff. Maintaining an office is a difficult task. But Latha Madam has been maintaining the office administration and doing her duty very well. I hope the organization further leads with Latha Madam's service.

Sincerely,

**K. Raveendran,
Front Office Assistant, ZOO**

Testimonial from Sarojamma

Latha has worked 20 years in the ZOO office. Over the years he has been looking after me and caring for me very well. She is very kind. She always speaks to me very respectful. I am replicating the same to her. Wherever she goes for outing she will take me like her mother to all the places. I am also treating her as one of my daughters all the times.

**Mrs. Sarojamma
Office Mom, ZOO**



Latha and Saroja at 9A Lal Bahadur Colony on Dec'10

Testimonial from Manju

This is a great opportunity to write about my best pal in the office. I know Latha from last nine years and we have shared many ups and down of our lives together. There are many good qualities in her and its difficult to state each and everything in a small note and I believe that certain things needs to be left unsaid as words won't be enough to express my gratitude and love for her...

Work: She is very much dedicated, efficient and multitasker. There is no doubt that she is the most workaholic person in



Latha with ZOO Crew at 29, Bharathi Colony on 15 May 2007

our office, probably in sleep also she dreams about work. When it comes to work, she will forget everything including eating, family, social events, etc. In last nine years, I have not seen any change in her working style, she will be always last to leave the office. Many times she worked alone till 11:00pm in the office. Even when she takes leave for some personal work, any spare time she gets at home, she will be back to work. At times, I have seen that she is exhausted with long day work but when asked her to go home, every time, I use to get same reply "I will finish this and go". In fact, she enjoys her work, probably it will be right to say that she is addicted to work. She is greatest asset for the office. Everyone in the office is dependent on her for some or other thing. She has done so many of my work including few of my personal stuff.

She is very sportive. When she is with Sanjay and me, we always pull her leg or joke about her but she never gets offended and is always cheerful and smiling. Even in her worst mood, if an outsider visits her, she will welcome with a smiling face. I am sure, many people would have told her that she has a beautiful smile and that's true.

Family/Personal: She is sole bonding source of her family. She is blessed with a very supportive family. She is very fortunate to have Ravi as her husband, without his support she would have not been able to work peacefully without worrying about the home front.

Friendship: Everyone thinks that she can not think beyond work but that's not true, she is very emotional and nice human being, she fits in category of a true friend, she might not take part in your happy moments especially going out to celebrate something but I can always count her when I am in a problem. She always patiently listened to my grievance and I have always got an unbiased suggestions from her. I can never forget the support she gave to me and my family when I was hospitalized. I was surprised to see her leaving work (which is the priority of her life) and spending days in hospital with me (though she would have compensated it by working till late in night). She was there for all medical tests I underwent, and she was also there by my side when I broke down emotionally. I am indebted to her unselfish love, affection and support. I wish, I can reciprocate some day for everything she has done for me. I very happy that we share a special bond. Thanks Latha for being such a lovely human being and my best friend.

Love

**Manju Siliwal, Research Associate
Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society**



Quitting time at ZOO sometime in Oct 1996. Latha pregnant with Rajesh about to mount her husband Ravi's bike

Testimonial from Pravin

I have pleasure working with Latha for over 9 years at ZOO. I am impressed with her quality, hard work and ability to face and prevail over challenging tasks. Over these 20 years with ZOO she plays a valuable role in accounts, office administration as well as designing. She puts more time at the office in innovating new techniques and shortcuts to do things better and get the best from each one of us. Her dedication and experience is a great asset to ZOO. Hope she gets greater responsibilities and will continue to achieve even greater success with the ZOO Crew.

Best wishes,

Pravin Kumar

Database Manager, ZOO

Testimonial from Payal

It's very hard to put into a few words just how much Latha has helped me over the past 7 years, when there is so much to say. Apart from always helping me figure out things for work - everything from computer applications to making T-shirt designs and helping me pay my bills - she has also played a huge role in making me feel at home in Coimbatore and the ZOO office. I congratulate her on completing 20 years at ZOO and wish her the very best for the years to come. She is an amazing woman and I thank her for being a part of my life.

Best Regards,

**Payal Molur, Conservation Educator
F5-Go Wild Workshops, Coimbatore**

Testimonial from Arul

Latha is a very hard worker and very talented. She has been working here for the past 20 years due to her excellent skills. She likes her job very much. Like a teacher she will teach everything and I have learned many things from her. I have improved and developed so much, only because of her advice and guidance. I convey my best wishes and congratulations to her.

Regards,

G. Arul

Sr. Office Assistant, ZOO

Testimonial from Sudha

Latha means 'creeper' (plant) in Sanskrit. I know her for the last 10 years. First it started with official communications, as Ms. Sally Walker is a friend and colleague of Mr. Manoj Misra, my boss. She is a very polite person with a wonderfully sweet voice; hence I always enjoyed talking with her. In 2007, I told Latha that I have to visit Coimbatore for my daughter's college admission and requested her to book a hotel for us. She was so happy to hear that and said, "You can stay with us and no need to book a hotel". I was slightly hesitant because we had not

met before. I told her we are four people (my husband, my daughter, my elder brother and I). She said there would be no problem. So I said ok and asked her for her address. She in turn asked me to give her the train details and said she would send her husband and son to the station to receive us. She then gave me a general description of her husband so that we could identify him.

We were there for 3 days, during our first visit. It was so enjoyable that we always recall those sweet memories. She was really lucky for my daughter as she got her engineering seat without any problem. During our stay, she spoke more about Sally and her colleagues and the organization than about her own family. She is a very dedicated, sincere and hard working person. Her every breath and every thought is about Sally and Z.O.O. She loves and respects Sally just like her own mother. Latha is a gem of a person. I admire and respect Latha very much. She is a precious asset that Sally ma'am has in her organization. I wish her all the love, luck and success in her life. God Bless!

Sudha Mohan

Program Manager, PEACE Institute

Testimonial from R. Marimuthu

Latha's 20th Anniversary...stupendous two decades service..a lesson to be learnt.

It is more apt for me to write a testimonial to my beloved colleague Latha, who worked with me since she joined in Zoo Outreach Organization. I was off for some time from the organization but she continued and completed her 20 years service to ZOO. . . .a great achievement!

"Laaaa....tha is a Mantra revolving around Zoo Outreach Organisation for the past two decades. Still I have the lovely memories of the date and year she had joined in ZOO, it was one fine morning of May 3, 1991 she came for the interview. She joined with ZOO team on the same day itself. ZOO had limited staff and infrastructure in those days. Most of the works were done manually. After joining, though this current job was fairly new to her and involved manual and petty kind of things, she learned all kinds of work with utmost interest, and picked up routine office work very quickly and efficiently with Madam Sally Walker's guidance. That is one of her great talents... learning new things very swiftly. I never heard from her saying that this could not be done. She always look things positively and try it right way which is good enough to Madam. She has been very dynamic for all these 20 years. She has never lost that spirit even today and it is very obvious to long-time colleagues like me. *Practice makes perfect.* . . . a dynamic lady!



Latha and ZOO crew in 5th ZOO office at 29 Bharathi Colony in 2001



Latha working hard collating information from Taxon Data Sheets during the Indian Reptile CAMP at the State Forest Service College in 22 May 1997

Whatever the new innovative things she learned after taking some risks, it may be a small printing work or big software related problem solved, she never keep it for herself but always shared it with others to learn, keeping in mind with the institution's development. That is a good practice of good managers. Somehow it lessens their work and at the same time reduces dependence on one staff for all works will go away. She followed this when Geetha joined after that. Still she is practicing this and teaches others as much as she can. *Many hands make light work.* Here I like to indicate her tireless hard works which have carried her to her present position. It is not routine promotion happening in the Government service. Here her promotion is measured by her inimitable hard work. She never counts up working hours. If there is a work and she is needed for that work, until the work is get finished, she doesn't want to leave the office. Her work ethics is more than admirable? Even I couldn't follow this sometimes. Really I am jealous of this quality. *Experience is the best teacher. . . . a good teacher & dedicated worker!*

When talking about administering works in the office, she is very jovial person sometimes and enormously serious person sometimes like different sides of the same coin because both is very important to run an organization. This is not only with the staff and also other service providers to the ZOO. She uses both qualities for organization's development...if the works have to be get it done she uses charm and firmness as weapon. In the end she is successful and achieves what we need for the organisation all the time. . . . **a good administrator!**

Her acquaintance with her colleagues is always good. She is maintaining everlasting friendship with all of them. She is caring for others and sharing whatever she hears from them to convey to Madam Sally Walker and helps them in appropriate way. *A friend in need is a friend indeed.* So, ZOO became an alternative home to all of us. ... **a caring custodian!**

Latha's hospitality is superb. In 1991-1994, I used to visit her old home near Ramakrishna Hospital whenever I go to Gandhipuram. Really I was enthralled by her family's hospitality, including each and every one at that time. This testimonial is an opportunity for me to thank her Father and Mother and husband and kids and pay back my gratitude by words. They are wonderful role model parents who stand behind Latha all the times for her Himalayan achievement at the ZOO for last 20 years. Without their unstinted support it would not have been possible for Latha to get this greater extent in her life. *Honor thy Mother and Father.* Latha, let continue your service with the same spirit & zeal to attain Silver, Golden and Platinum Jubilee of your career in the ZOO. We are all sailing on the same boat with similar

goal and the boat is captained by Madam Sally for the good cause that is voiceless creatures' welfare. We all work together all the times to achieve our goal. *Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success.*

Best of luck for the coming years with the word "**A good manager is a woman who isn't worried about her own career but rather the careers of those who work for her**".

regards

R. Marimuthu
Education Officer, ZOO

Testimonial from Geetha

I congratulate and appreciate Latha for her 20th Anniversary in ZOO. She is know to me since 1993. She is a dedicated person who gives importance to our ZOO family. She willingly do all kinds of work in ZOO even though it's not hers. She is very punctual and expect us to be the same. She is very much straight forward but kind to us. She is very strict in her work. If we find any difficulties in completing our work, she helps us to complete it. She has much of talent in all aspect. I wonder about her working style, her remembrance of things, managing projects, travel arrangements, accounts, etc. She has good knowledge in computer and networking. I have learnt a lot from her in accounts, administration, and all official works. Her administrating capacity is awesome that am surprised about. She does not only help us work wise, but also give hands in our family worries. She is very much updated about all new rules regarding tax, society, accounts, etc. and also gives information to us about those. I am very happy and grateful to work with such a person who leads me to improve my career".

Love

Geetha
Accounts cum Admin Executive, ZOO

Testimonial from Raveendran

Latha's family were friends of mine and when her parents and she approached me to recommend a 'decent' employment, I immediately referred ZOO. Her parents were apprehensive as they didn't know about ZOO. I convinced them about the environment etc and gave suitable assurance.

Latha used to call me as 'Anna' (brother). I am very happy because I had recommended a good employment/ environment for my sister and she truly honors me by fulfilling all expectations of ZOO. Her continuous service for two decades with growth at ZOO makes me very proud.

Thanks & regards,

N. Raveendran
General Manager
Sakthi Finance Ltd., Coimbatore.



Rodent CAMP in Coimbatore on 10 February 2004