

## *“Teams for Tigers” across the world....*



Dear Friends,

Gauri Sreenivasan from Canada wrote me a small email on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 10. Her daughter Maya was turning 7 yrs old. Maya loves tigers, and she wanted to have a 'tiger party'. To celebrate, and to send a message about reducing consumption of frivolous things, Maya agreed to collect money instead of gifts from her friends and donate for the work to conserve wild tiger habitat in India.

Gauri requested me to accept this donation for Satpuda Foundation? I read this email on March 1, 2010 after I returned back to city from the remote jungle. I was stuned to read it. More than donating the money, Maya's family's efforts to sensitive themselves and others to tiger conservation really touched me”

I immediately responded to Gauri. In an email exchange I found that for several days Maya was asking her mother “if I have responded to her request”. Being in the remote jungle, I had done injustice to the sentiments of little kid Maya, which I have done with my two daughters too.

After knowing that Maya's birthday is on 2<sup>nd</sup> March (and she arranged a Tiger Party on March 6<sup>th</sup>), I immediately decided to send her a message and wishes!

I wrote following message-

*Dear Maya,*

*Today Indians are celebrating a “Holi” festival (a festival of colours) when I am writing this email to you. My daughters Srusti (10 yrs old) and Shravani (5yrs old) are specially happy to see their father at home (though doing work at office on 1st floor of the building) rather than playing a colourful Holy. However now a days they don't play much because I have explained them that “wasting water” is not good and chemical colours are harmful for our body.*

*I was in Melghat Tiger Reserve last night where our tribal friend Ravi (12 yrs old Korku tribal) is trying hard to aware his own community about the importance of Tigers and its role in the ecosystem.*

*For me Ravi, Srushti, Shravani and you are same. Maya, my friends at Satpuda Foundation have been working hard to convince the larger Indian society that we*

*must protect the tigers because they help in maintaining the “wildlife chain”. Tigers and wildlife in the forests actually helps in forest regeneration which actually contributes and conserve water for humans. Not only this, these tiger habitats actually regulate the climate, conserve floral and faunal biodiversity which helps humans to grow their food in the farms. They also provide many ecological services for you kids.*

*We design several programmes where several volunteers like you contribute and participate to achieve our conservation targets. Final goal is to protect our eco-systems for comfortable and peaceful life of your generation. Maya, you are special for us because tomorrow you will be celebrating your birthday. Please accept this message as a “Birthday Gift” as I can not give you more than this. (I hardly remember attending any birthday of Srusti and Shravani due to my hectic field work).I give you a “promise” in the gift that I will try to protect the tigers, forest and water for your generation till my last week end on the mother earth (this morning one of my friends have reminded me that I will at the most spend 2065 weekends on earth).*

*Now please don’t exchange me “Thanks” as I want a big promise from you. Maya, I want you and your friends to respect your parents and elders who are so caring! Not only this, you and your friends should form a group, meet once in a year (may be on your birthday) and explain elders “one simple” thing which you did in last one year which has actually made a positive change in the environment at your place. Will you do this?*

*I am sure you will give me this promise!*

*Maya, I wish you a very happy birthday and please convey my wishes to your friends for arranging such a nice and innovative “Tiger Party”. Please send me the picture of “Tiger Party” (along with one page note on how you celebrated) and we would love to put that on Satpuda Foundation website so that the kids of your generation should follow you by doing some good conservation actions for well being of mother earth.*

*Kishor Uncle*

Gauri was happy to receive the message. She read it for Maya on her birthday and again on 6<sup>th</sup> March in a Tiger Party. Responding to my request, Gauri sent me the report. I will put that for your information-



**Maya wrote:** Thank you for the nice birthday message. I had thirteen friends come to my tiger party. Me and my family drew a big head of a tiger and put it on the front

door (pasted above). We received \$300! Everybody did a great tiger puppet craft and we danced to the song “eye of the Tiger.” Everybody liked the balloons. Inside each balloon was a tiger charade you had to act out. We also did a tiger quiz and had a beautiful tiger cake. Everybody got a tiger book at the end of the party. In the tiger book there were stickers, and there were also pictures of wild cats! Roar! - Maya (7yrs).



**Maya’s Parents note:** Maya has been writing out her party report in the evening after story time. The letter we received from Kishore Rithe to the kids was very inspiring. I read parts of the message out loud to the children (over cake-see above-and ice cream) including the part that challenged them to undertake at least one action to help the environment. The children came up with a few good ideas including: *not driving in their cars, using your bike, and picking up garbage that they find outside.* We had lots of positive feedback on the party theme, and hopefully, in a very small way, have helped spread the word in our little corner of the world about the important work you are doing. We will be wiring you the money shortly. Thank you again for your wonderful communication with us and here are some promised photos of the party!

### **Can I see more “Teams for Tigers” across the world?**

This event has been memorable for me! I really appreciate the concern shown by Maya’s parents-Gauri and Bruce Sreenivasan. Satpuda Foundation would request its young readers of Maya’s age to follow, implement and expand the “action programme” given by Maya’s team. I would like to see such more “**Teams for Tigers**” acting across the world! It’s a time of action now....

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