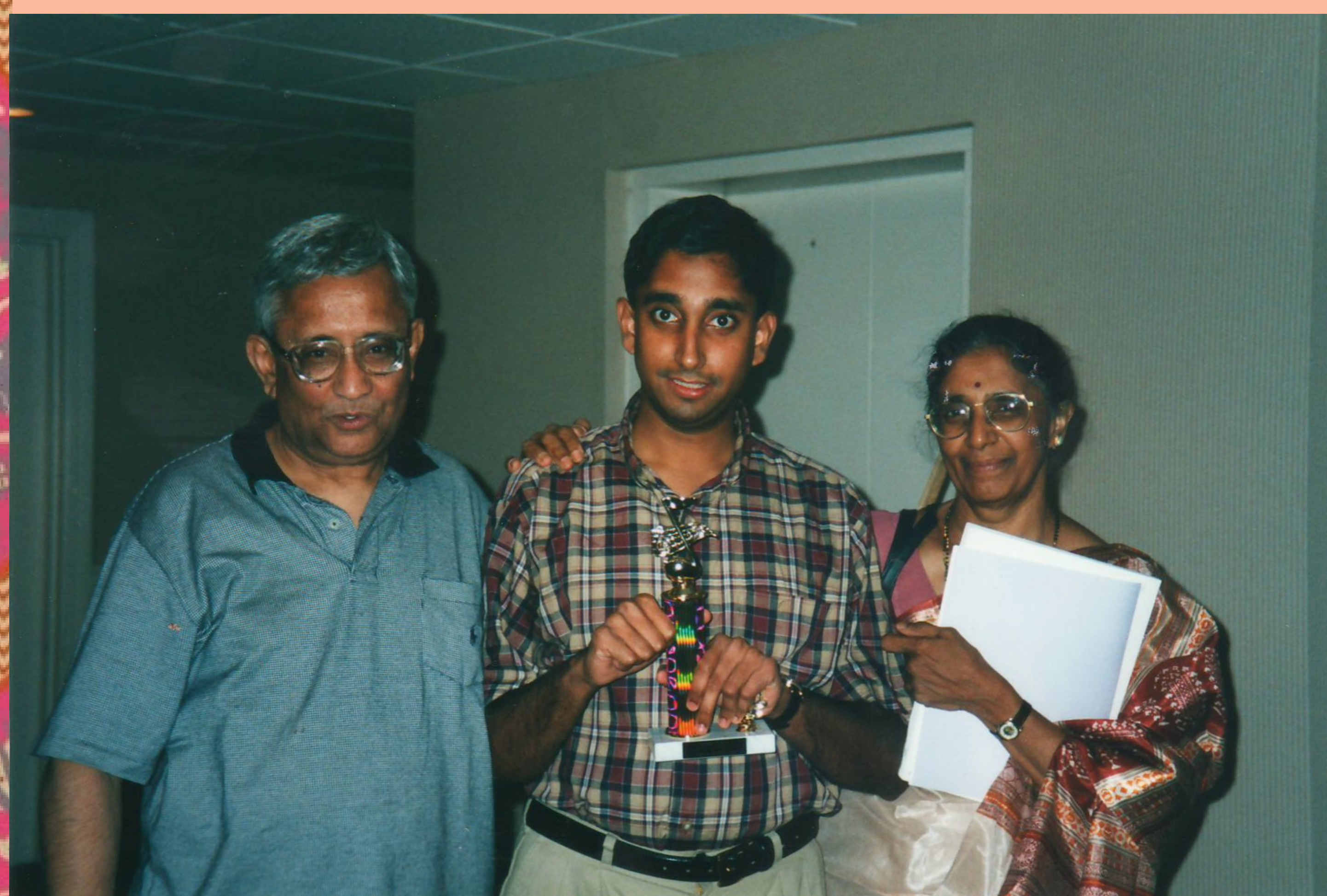


CHEERS FOR ANOTHER RESTORATION OF RIGHTS

We met Ganesh and his mom Meena just under 3 years ago when they came to our office to sign up, literally on the last day before our building closed down for Covid! His family had petitioned for guardianship when he turned 18, because they were told it was what they needed to do, but Meena said they had no idea that guardianship would remove all of his rights, or that there might be an alternative.



Ganesh and his parents



Ganesh playing piano

By the time we met, Ganesh was in his 40's and quite accomplished. He plays classical piano, studied business, and has worked in data entry and bookkeeping. He cooks all kinds of Indian food (yum!), volunteers at Queens Community House and has taken many trips with family. Ganesh clearly did not need a guardian, but also understood that he needed support for decisions in several areas, and was excited to sign up with SDMNY. He was assigned to our former Project Coordinator, Hezzy Smith which was a great match: Ganesh's family is from Tamil Nadu in Southern India, and Hezzy has done important work in Bangladesh and speaks Bengali! The facilitation went well and Ganesh signed his SDMA in June, 2021, still during Covid. He was referred to our partners at Disability Rights New York (DRNY) and was looking forward to going to court to have his rights restored, but by then the courts were virtually closed, and subsequently other family issues caused delay.

Last week Ganesh finally had his day in court, although remotely, and Surrogate Kelly terminated the guardianship and restored all of Ganesh's rights. The petition for restoration, with a long affidavit from Hezzy, explained SDMNY facilitation and Ganesh's SDMA. Meena reports that, at the hearing "[Ganesh] was able to convince the judge that he makes his own decisions!" We're not surprised!



Laura Marks

Although we don't have any pictures of the court proceeding, Ganesh and Meena were part of the videos we shot remotely in 2020, so you can "meet" them [here](#). And, as always, we want to thank Laura Marks, the DRNY lawyer who did the necessary work to make this great event happen.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GANESH AND HIS MOM, AND THANKS TO LAURA AND DRNY!