

# Greg Hazle

Executive director,  
Boca Helping Hands

BY JENNIFER COHEN



**BIRTHPLACE:** I grew up in my native Jamaica and migrated with my family to Florida in 1985.

**CURRENT RESIDENCE:** Boca Raton since 1993

**COLLEGE:** I received my undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from the University of the West Indies and an MBA in finance from the University of Miami.

**PRIOR TO JOINING BOCA HELPING HANDS:** I was a senior executive in various roles at NextEra as well as in a number of other Fortune 500 companies, including Alcan Aluminum and Cemex. I worked in the areas of process engineering, corporate finance, strategic planning and project development in the public utility, independent energy, mining and construction materials industries.

**CURRENT POSITION:** I am beginning my second year as executive director. Previously, I served on the Boca Helping Hands board of directors for four years.

**WHAT LED YOU TO BOCA HELPING HANDS?** Someone I knew from my church told me he was interested in having me join the board because he knew I had a corporate background. It was really just out of the blue. I had worked with for-profit organizations in the energy business, and I was not planning on switching careers. I was actually in pre-retirement mode at the time and was doing private consulting. The previous executive director of the charity left, and the board asked me to step in as interim director. I ended up accepting the role while they looked for a permanent replacement. After four months in an interim role, and after looking at so many candidates, I decided to stay.

**WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE?** Part of the day is focused on daily operations and complex logistics. There is always an operation issue that needs attention. It might be picking up food, managing drivers, and making sure food is stored and prepared properly. Part of the job focuses on development—job training or determining what classes to hold—so part of my day is spent working on agreements and interacting with the people involved.

**IF YOU WEREN'T IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?** I think I would still be trying to pursue the consulting business, perhaps consulting for solar development. I used to develop power plants for FPL.

**WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACED IN YOUR CAREER?** In this job, it's the first time I'm responsible for setting culture. Now I'm making the kinds of decisions and changes to motivate my staff to change the way the work place looks and feels.

**CAN YOU SHARE DETAILS ABOUT A REWARDING PART OF YOUR CURRENT ROLE?** I am learning a lot about my community and learning there are good things I did not notice before. Having the opportunity to work at helping people meet basic needs and live sustainable lives is a privilege.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?** I try to make time for sports; I play soccer even though I am retirement age, and I like golf. I'm also pretty active in my church, and I sing in the worship service.

**HOW WOULD PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU DESCRIBE YOU?** Easy going and laid back. I'm originally from Jamaica so "no problem." I try to look at things with perspective, and if there's a problem there's a solution. I rarely demonstrate desperation. People think of me being a calming type of presence.

**FAVORITE QUOTE OR MOTTO?** I like people to have principles in their life. If you stand for nothing, you'll fall for anything.

## ABOUT BOCA HELPING HANDS

- Boca Helping Hands (BHH) is a community-based nonprofit organization that was formed in 1998 by a group of local religious congregations.
- BHH first opened as a food center in November 1998, serving nutritious hot lunches three days a week and distributing bags of groceries to families.
- Its job mentoring provides coaching, guidance and classes designed to help individuals who are seeking employment opportunities. BHH offers the following classes: hospitality, home health aide, CDL (commercial truck driving), customer service representative training and IT help desk technician.
- These additional services complement its food and resource programs in a continuing effort to guide clients to create self-sufficiency. Visit [bocahelpinghands.org](http://bocahelpinghands.org) to learn more.