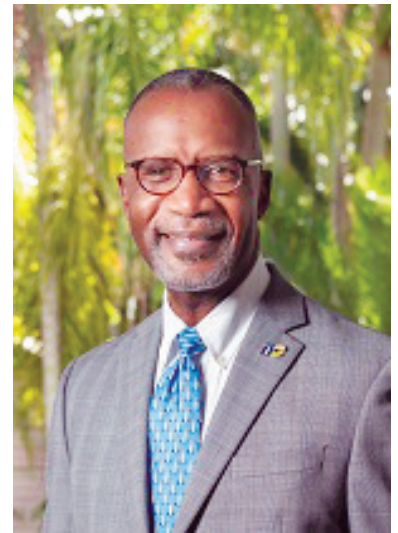


Finney focused on an inclusive workforce

As we mourn the recent, unexpected passing of Michael Finney, president and chief executive officer of Miami-Dade Beacon Council, we should be mindful of his vision that inclusion is a central element of a successful business environment. In bringing to employers the Miami Community Ventures program, Finney was a vocal proponent and exemplar of hiring people with disabilities to strengthen the quality of our regional workforce.



Michael Finney

Too often, blind and visually impaired people and others with disabilities are overlooked to fill job openings, even when their backgrounds, training and experiences qualify them for consideration. When Finney joined the board of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, he toured our job-training program and immediately began interviewing our clients for open positions.

Among those he met was Anneth Lezcano, who is visually impaired and learned to use screen-reading software and other specialized information technologies. Finney was so impressed that he hired her as project assistant in the new Miami Opioid Project. He and his team subsequently collaborated with our job-training program and the Florida Division of Blind Services, exemplifying his approach to creating an equitable and diverse work environment.

South Florida is blessed that major employers – including Florida Blue, Home Depot and Amazon – are also committed to recruiting and retaining those with disabilities. The Miami Beacon Council Community Ventures and the Miami Lighthouse Job Training Program are committed to introducing businesses to resources for qualified and motivated employees.

Let us all strive to emulate Finney's belief in a truly inclusive workforce.



*Virginia A. Jacko
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