

# Catherine Hoke

*Founder & CEO, Defy Ventures, Author*

After being given a second chance of her own, Catherine Hoke founded Defy Ventures, a national nonprofit organization that “transforms the hustle” of currently and formerly incarcerated people, known as Entrepreneurs in Training. Defy’s vision is to end mass incarceration by using entrepreneurship as a tool to transform legacies and human potential.

Since its founding in 2010, Defy has enrolled 1,700+ EITs across 18 states and 20 correctional facilities, and engaged 3,500+ executive volunteers. Defy has mentored 150 of its graduates’ companies, which in turn have created more than 350 employment opportunities for people in their communities. Defy’s recidivism rate to date is less than 5 percent vs. the national re-arrest average of 76 percent.

Cat was named a #MakeTechHuman Agent of Change by WIRED and Nokia for being one of “17 Global Influencers Expanding Human Possibility Through Technology.” She has received the MDC Partners Humanitarian Award on behalf of Defy Ventures, and was included in Forbes’ 40 Women to Watch over 40. She was also named by Fast Company as one of the 100 Most Creative People in Business and is an Ashoka Fellow.

Cat is the author of *A Second Chance: For You, for Me, and for the Rest of Us*, a book about new starts, forgiveness, shame, and the power of possibility.