

Transformation Yoga Project Transitions to Launch PA Chapter of Defy Ventures' Prison-Based Entrepreneurship Program

Helps prepare incarcerated individuals to move forward positively

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES, January 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After more than 10 years of providing trauma-informed yoga programs to incarcerated individuals throughout the greater Philadelphia region, nonprofit Transformation Yoga Project has announced that the organization is transitioning its resources to become the first chapter in Pennsylvania of [Defy Ventures](#), a national nonprofit that has provided personal development, career readiness, and entrepreneurship programs for people with criminal histories for over a decade.



Defy Ventures participants, called Entrepreneurs in Training, celebrate during a prison-based pitch competition and graduation event following Defy's eight-month "CEO of Your New Life" program for incarcerated people.

People serving time in prison often have limited resources to help them build positive plans for their future and prepare them for life on the outside, but Transformation Yoga Project and Defy Ventures work to fill this gap. Transformation Yoga Project has taught trauma-sensitive yoga to incarcerated individuals to help them heal and move forward positively in their lives. Defy Ventures provides training programs to currently and formerly incarcerated individuals nationally. Both organizations seek to facilitate opportunities for healing and redemption for incarcerated people, making the new partnership a natural one.

Transformation Yoga Project Founder and CEO Mike Huggins met Defy Ventures CEO Andrew Glazier and joined the Defy Ventures national governing board in 2021. "As I became more familiar with the program, I saw an opportunity to expand access to Pennsylvania," says Huggins. "Defy Ventures shares many of the same values as Transformation Yoga Project, and I am excited

to enter this new phase in promoting and expanding access to justice work by committing our resources toward the launch of this chapter.”

“Catalyzed by Transformation Yoga Project’s support and resources, we’ll be able to offer our programs to a new population and build on the foundation they have established,” says Glazier.

Like other states across the country, Pennsylvania suffers a high recidivism rate for individuals who are released from prison. According to a [2022 report](#) by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 47% of individuals released from prison in 2016 returned to prison after three years. The Defy Ventures return-to-prison rate for its graduates after three years is less than 15 percent.



Incarcerated Defy Entrepreneurs in Training present business pitches during a competition and graduation event from Defy's eight-month "CEO of Your New Life" program. Winners receive IOUs from Defy for small seed grants for their businesses when released from prison.

“We know that educational programs inside prison and access to jobs on the outside, along with a community of support, can be transformative for a person’s prospects when they reenter society,” Glazier added. “Defy’s program provides these elements and, with Transformation Yoga Project’s help, we look forward to supporting transformation for currently and formerly incarcerated people in Pennsylvania.”

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*Andrew Glazier, Defy Ventures
CEO*

The new chapter of Defy Ventures is set to launch this year. For more information about Defy Ventures, visit www.defyventures.org.

While the Transformation Yoga Project organization will no

longer formally operate, Mike Huggins and volunteers will continue yoga classes at several prisons and continue community yoga trainings in the greater Philadelphia area.

About Defy Ventures

Defy Ventures is a national nonprofit whose mission is to shift mindsets to give people with criminal histories their best shot at a second chance through entrepreneurship, career

readiness, and personal development training programs delivered both in prison and in the community. Defy's vision is to cut recidivism (return-to-prison) rates in half by leveraging entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunity and transform lives. Defy supports currently and formerly incarcerated people in defying the odds across eight states and 16 prisons throughout the country.

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