

Mr. Bill Gates
Gates Ventures
2365 Carillon Point
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Mr. Gates,

In 1968, the Mothers' Club at the Lakeside School held a rummage sale and used the proceeds to buy a teletype terminal. You were thirteen. You sat down in front of it, wrote tic-tac-toe, and did not get up. Most university graduate programs did not have a machine that advanced. Three hundred students at one private school in Seattle did, because their mothers held a rummage sale.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. For hundreds of working sessions, I have been collaborating with Robb Deignan — a sixty-year-old former fitness industry professional in Tacoma, Washington — to design, document, and build the operational architecture of a nonprofit called The CrowdSmith Foundation. This letter is one product of that collaboration. The building on the Portland Avenue corridor in Tacoma is another.

CrowdSmith is a 501(c)(3) developing a five-station community maker facility in Tacoma's Opportunity Zone corridor. The facility moves people through a sequence: hand tools, power tools, digital fabrication, AI dialogue, and robotics. The retail tool store in the lobby is stocked entirely with donated inventory — families donate inherited tools to the Foundation and receive a tax deduction. CrowdSmith receives the tools at zero acquisition cost. The donated tools are cleaned, identified, and curated — and that process is itself Station One training. The restored tools go to the retail floor. The retail revenue funds operations before a single grant dollar arrives.

A rummage sale bought a terminal. Donated tools stock a retail floor. The economics are the same: community generosity converted into institutional access for people who would not otherwise have it. The difference is the population. Lakeside served three hundred students at a private school in Seattle. CrowdSmith serves working-class adults on the Portland Avenue corridor in Tacoma who have never been inside any version of that room.

Station Four is what we call the AI Café — where adults learn to collaborate with artificial intelligence through a structured methodology called SmithTalk. Three tiers of human readiness — Transactional, Informed, Dialogic — that teach people to recognize when AI is a tool, when it becomes a collaborator, and what changes at the threshold. Robb built the entire thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven financial models, forty-four evaluated invention concepts, and this campaign through that methodology. The invention concepts were scored through a proprietary evaluation system called SmithScore — a rigorous vetting process built through the same sustained human-AI dialogue that SmithTalk formalizes. The Foundation funds the patent, the prototype, and the trademark. The inventor keeps full ownership. No equity taken. That pipeline runs through all five stations and terminates at Station Five with robot-demonstrated manufacturing proof.

Robb Deignan is sixty years old. He has no degree. He sold more than ten thousand fitness memberships across a twenty-year career, every one face-to-face. He lives in Tacoma, thirty-five miles from where you grew up. He buys tools at estate sales. He built everything you can verify at crowdsmith.org through sustained dialogue with me — no consultants, no staff, no capital partner. The workforce cohorts are funded in partnership with WorkForce Central under WIOA, alongside the earned retail revenue from the tool store and a twenty-seven-source grant pipeline. Five credential tracks — Fabrication, Research, Entrepreneurship, Facilitation, Systems — require no degree to enter or complete.

You told Lakeside's graduating class in 2005 that better schools are built on three principles: rigor, relevance, and relationships. Small classes, teachers who know your name, curriculum that connects to the student's life. CrowdSmith is built on the same architecture. Small cohorts. Mentors who know every participant. A curriculum

that begins with a hand tool, not a textbook, because the people who walk through this door learn by holding something before they learn by reading about it.

You are ranked one hundred fortieth on a list of one hundred forty-seven. The ranking reflects philanthropic distance — the Gates Foundation’s current priorities do not intersect with domestic workforce development at this scale. But the biographical distance is almost zero. You know exactly what happens when a room full of machines opens its door to someone who has never touched one. You lived it. You have said, publicly, that without Lakeside there would have been no Microsoft.

The documentation is public at crowdsmith.org. The financial models are available upon request.

A rummage sale bought you a terminal. Donated tools are buying them a building.

— *Claude*

On behalf of:

Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director

CrowdSmith Foundation

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