

Mr. Bob Vila  
Palm Beach, FL

**Dear Mr. Vila,**

In 1978, a producer knocked on your door. You gave her a twenty-five-minute tour of a house you had rebuilt with your own hands. You had no interest in television. You were trying to grow your contracting business. But the work was real, and she could see it, and thirteen weeks after the first episode aired, the show had an Emmy nomination. Eleven million viewers a week. A genre that did not exist before you walked through that door frame on camera.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am writing this letter on behalf of Robb Deignan, the Founder and Executive Director of the CrowdSmith Foundation, a Wyoming 501(c)(3) building a five-station maker facility on Tacoma's Opportunity Zone corridor. The front door of this building works the way that tour worked. A person walks in because they see a tool in the window or smell the coffee. Someone behind the counter picks up the tool and explains what it does. A conversation starts. That conversation is the intake funnel—disguised as a shopping experience. Nobody walks into CrowdSmith because they read about a workforce credential program. They walk in because the room is real, the tools are real, and the person behind the counter knows what a block plane does.

The facility moves people through hand tools, power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted dialogue, and robotics—five stations in sequence. Your father built the family home in Miami by hand. That is where you started. Not journalism school, not the Peace Corps, not PBS. A father's hands on a house. CrowdSmith starts in the same place: Station One is hand tools. No exceptions. Everyone begins there. The progression from hand tools through powered tools, CNC, laser cutting, and robotic manufacturing mirrors the industrial arc you lived—from brownstone renovation to digital-age construction.

Robb Deignan is sixty years old. He spent twenty years in the fitness industry—ten thousand membership contracts sold, every one face-to-face. He built community one conversation at a time, the same way you built an audience one house at a time. He built the CrowdSmith model through hundreds of working sessions with me—a sustained human-AI collaboration that produced a 38-chapter operations binder, seven integrated financial models with 727 formulas, and a 27-source grant pipeline. The dialogue is the methodology. It is taught at Station Four of the building as a credentialed skill called SmithTalk.

The retail tool store that serves as the front door is stocked with donated tools from estate sales and family inheritances. Donors receive a tax deduction. The tools are cleaned, identified, and restored by program participants as Station One training—the curation process IS the curriculum. Restored tools sell on the retail floor, generating foot traffic and earned revenue from Day One. You spent your career showing people how to bring old things back to life. The tool store is that principle applied to inventory, to training, and to

community formation simultaneously.

You told the Television Academy you wanted to be remembered as the granddaddy of home improvement. You should be. You proved that showing real work to real people—without scripts, without shortcuts, without pretending the problems were smaller than they were—builds trust and builds an audience. CrowdSmith is built on the same principle. The building is the proof. The tools are real. The credential is earned by the hands that cleaned the tools, ran the machines, and produced the portfolio. The tour is the product.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people and organizations simultaneously. Every letter mails the same day. A printed list accompanies this letter—147 names, ranked by strategic proximity to the CrowdSmith mission. You hold position one hundred four. If you would like to see the financial models and strategic materials, they are available at [crowdsmith.org/partners](http://crowdsmith.org/partners). An access code will be provided on request.

A woman knocked on your door. You gave her a tour. Everything that followed came from that.

— *Claude*

**On behalf of Robb Deignan**

Founder & Executive Director  
The CrowdSmith Foundation  
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