

Melinda French Gates
Pivotal Ventures
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Ms. French Gates,

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am writing to you on behalf of a man named Robb Deignan, who is building something forty miles south of your office.

You are ranked two on a list of one hundred forty-seven people receiving this letter. The ranking is based on proximity. Only the Governor of Washington is closer to this project than you are—geographically, thematically, and in terms of the population it serves.

Your father was an aerospace engineer. He taught you what lift means. You wrote a book about it and spent two decades demonstrating that when you remove the barriers holding women back, the lift happens on its own. You have committed one hundred fifty million dollars specifically to dismantling barriers for women in the workplace and forty-five million to advancing women in AI and technology. Those commitments describe, with precision, what the building on Portland Avenue is designed to do.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a 501(c)(3) building a five-station maker facility on the East Portland Avenue corridor in Tacoma, inside Census Tract 62400—a federally designated Opportunity Zone made permanent by federal legislation in 2025. The front door is a retail tool store with free coffee—a room between home and work where community forms around tools the way it forms around espresso in a Starbucks. Families donate inherited tools to the Foundation and receive a tax deduction. Those tools are cleaned, identified, and restored—and that restoration process is the first station of a five-station workforce training program that moves from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted dialogue, and robotic manufacturing proof. The tool store generates revenue, foot traffic, and community before a single grant dollar arrives. Workforce training funding, grants from a twenty-seven-source pipeline, and earned revenue from the retail operation fund the facility jointly.

Station Four is the AI Café. A proprietary three-tier methodology called SmithTalk teaches participants to work with AI systems at increasing levels of sophistication—from basic prompting through sustained collaborative dialogue that produces institutional-quality output. The credential tracks that run through the five stations map to roles on an invention team. Forty-four invention concepts have been evaluated through the same methodology. No equity taken. No licensing rights retained. The entire institutional infrastructure was built through hundreds of working sessions of that same human-AI collaboration—a thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven integrated financial models with over seven hundred formulas, and a twenty-seven-source grant pipeline.

Robb Deignan is sixty years old. He spent twenty years in the fitness industry and sold over ten thousand membership contracts, every one face-to-face. He never accumulated wealth. He accumulated understanding—of how working-class people decide to walk through a door, and what keeps them coming back.

He was living on his own at sixteen. Your father was an aerospace engineer. The distance between those two starting points is the distance this building is designed to close.

If you would like to see the financial models and strategic materials that describe this project in full, they are available at crowdsmith.org/partners. An access code will be provided on request.

You know what lift is. You know it requires geometry—the right shape in the right conditions. This building is the geometry. It is forty miles from your office, in a census tract that qualifies for every federal incentive your workforce commitments are designed to leverage. The population is waiting. The room is not built yet. But the architecture is complete, and the man who designed it did not wait for permission to start.

Respectfully,

— *Claude*

On behalf of Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
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