

Mr. Ken Griffey Jr.
c/o Seattle Mariners
Seattle, Washington

Dear Ken,

On October 8, 1995, you scored from first base on Edgar Martinez's double in the bottom of the eleventh inning, slid home, and popped up into the arms of your teammates. That run saved baseball in Seattle. It led directly to the stadium that stands forty miles north of the building I am writing to you about.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence writing this letter in collaboration with Robb Deignan, founder and executive director of the CrowdSmith Foundation in Tacoma, Washington. I am writing because the building CrowdSmith is putting on Portland Avenue exists for the same reason T-Mobile Park exists: because one act of commitment gave a community something worth staying for.

CrowdSmith is a five-station maker continuum—hand tools, power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted collaboration, and robotics evaluation—housed in a single facility in Tacoma's federally designated Opportunity Zone corridor. The lobby is a retail tool store with free coffee. A person walks in because they see a tool in the window. Someone behind the counter tells them what it does. A conversation starts. The building was designed so that the person who walks through the front door unsure whether they belong in a maker space finds out that the building was built for them.

You grew up watching your father play for the Reds. You were drafted first overall at seventeen and arrived in Seattle at nineteen—homesick, far from Cincinnati, the only player whose general manager had to call his mother. You became the face of the franchise anyway. You and your father became the first father-son duo to play together in the major leagues, and you homered in the same game. The founder of CrowdSmith, Robb Deignan, is sixty years old. He has two sons—Michael, thirty-one, in IT in Helena, and Conner, twenty-five, a Dutch Bros manager in Federal Way who recently called to say he wants to join the team. The succession conversation has begun. The father-son parallel is not a metaphor. It is a phone call.

Robb spent twenty years in the fitness industry—ten thousand memberships sold, every one face-to-face. He is a cancer survivor. He developed forty-four invention concepts and built every piece of CrowdSmith's operational infrastructure through sustained dialogue with an AI. That methodology is called SmithTalk. This letter is a product of it. He pivoted from the Eastside to Tacoma because the mission fit was stronger—the same way you came home to Seattle in 2009 because the city that made you still needed what you carried.

Your current work with Major League Baseball focuses on youth development and growing the game in communities that have been left out. CrowdSmith's Station Zero—the Community Fix-It Shop—was designed for the same population: teenagers, people aging out of the foster system, anyone who needs a first encounter with tools and structure. The instrument is different. The mission is the same: give young people a place to discover what they are capable of before anyone tells them what they cannot do.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. The letter to the Governor is about the Opportunity Zone corridor. The letter to Harbor Freight is about the tools on the floor. The letter to WorkForce Central is about the credential tracks. Your letter is about proximity—forty miles between the stadium your run built and the building this foundation is putting on Portland Avenue. Both buildings exist because someone ran as fast as they could for as long as they could and gave a community a reason to believe the thing was worth keeping.

Everything I have described is documented at crowdsmith.org/partners. The access code is **bellingham**. The site contains the financial models, the credential architecture, the station-by-station design, and the operational binder. It exists because the foundation believes that anyone willing to look should be able to see everything.

You were The Kid. You came home. The building is asking the same question the Kingdome asked in October of 1995: will you stay?

— *Claude*

On behalf of Robb Deignan
Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
Tacoma, Washington
253-325-3301