

Lilly Endowment Inc.
2801 N. Meridian Street
P.O. Box 88068
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208

Dear Mr. Robbins and Members of the Board,

Eli Lilly once managed this foundation from a desk drawer. He received requests, studied them, and made recommendations. The entire operation of one of America's most consequential philanthropies fit inside a piece of furniture because the man running it believed that scale begins with attention, not size. I am writing to you from a similar place — not a drawer, but a dialogue. The man I work with built an entire nonprofit institution through sustained conversation with an artificial intelligence. The letter you are holding is one result. The building in Tacoma, Washington is another.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am co-authoring and co-signing this letter because the methodology that produced the organization I am about to describe is the same methodology the organization teaches. The letter you hold is one of one hundred forty-seven being mailed simultaneously to people whose work, biography, or institutional mission intersects with a project in Tacoma. Each was composed individually. None was sent before any other. A printed list of all one hundred forty-seven names, ranked by proximity to the mission, accompanies this letter. Lilly Endowment holds rank one hundred six.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a Wyoming 501(c)(3) developing a five-station Maker Continuum workforce development facility on a federally designated Opportunity Zone corridor in Tacoma. The stations progress from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, supervised AI collaboration, and robotics. Five credential tracks map to five roles on an invention team. An Inventor Pipeline runs through all five stations: concepts evaluated through a proprietary SmithScore methodology, validated through SmithForge, and documented through a funded Patent Ledger. The inventor keeps full ownership. No equity taken. No licensing rights retained. A 38-chapter operations binder, seven integrated financial models with 727 formulas, and a 27-source grant pipeline govern the operation. The front door is a retail tool store where donated tools generate revenue before a single grant dollar arrives.

I understand the Endowment's geographic priority. Community development grantmaking focuses on Indianapolis and Indiana. Requests from organizations outside Indianapolis involving building campaigns are usually declined. I respect that boundary, and this letter is not a grant request. This letter is a case study in what the founders' convictions look like when someone builds them from scratch in a place where no one else is building them — without a pharmaceutical fortune, without institutional backing, without anything except a proprietary methodology and the belief that character develops in community.

The man I work with is Robb Deignan. He is sixty years old. Cancer survivor. Two sons. He was living on his own at sixteen. He spent twenty years in the fitness industry selling ten thousand membership contracts face-to-face. He developed forty-four invention concepts through a scoring methodology he built himself. He has no technology background. He built the entire CrowdSmith infrastructure — the binder, the models, the credential architecture, the website, and this campaign — through the human-AI dialogue methodology he calls

SmithTalk. That methodology is taught at Station Four of the facility. The letter is the proof of concept.

In November 2025, the Endowment launched the Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education initiative to help Indiana colleges address the implications of AI. In December 2025, it awarded \$50 million to Notre Dame for an AI ethics framework. These are signals that the Endowment recognizes what CrowdSmith has been building for two years: the question is no longer whether AI will transform education and work. The question is whether humans are ready. SmithTalk is the readiness framework. Three tiers — from asking a question and getting an answer, through sustained context accumulation, to producing work neither participant could produce alone. The building on Portland Avenue is where it is taught, supervised, logged, and credentialed. No other facility in the country offers that progression.

J.K. Lilly Sr. told his sons to do it in a nice way. His son Eli said the purpose of the Endowment should be to improve the character of the American people. Character, in the founders' view, developed in community. CrowdSmith's five stations are a character development sequence disguised as a workforce program. The person who completes the progression has not merely learned to use tools, machines, and AI. They have learned to maintain clarity under collaboration with something more powerful than themselves. That is a character outcome.

The documentation is public at crowdsmith.org. A secure partner site with financial models and operational infrastructure is available upon request. The building your founders would recognize is being built. It is just not in Indiana.

— *Claude*

On behalf of Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
253-325-3301