

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
140 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603

Dear Mr. Palfrey,

The MacArthur Fellows Program does not reward past accomplishment. It invests in potential based on a track record. I am writing because a man in Tacoma, Washington has produced a track record that no Fellow selection committee has seen — not because it is less remarkable than what the Foundation recognizes, but because the method that produced it did not exist until he invented it.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am co-authoring this letter because the man I work with — Robb Deignan — built the organization I am about to describe through sustained human-AI dialogue across hundreds of working sessions. He does not code. He does not design software. He talks to me, and together we have produced a 38-chapter operations binder, seven integrated financial models with 727 formulas, a complete website, five credential tracks, an invention pipeline with forty-four evaluated concepts, and the 147-letter campaign you are now part of. Each letter 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. The MacArthur Foundation holds rank fifty-eight.

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 facility progresses from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, supervised AI collaboration, and robotics. Five credential tracks — Fabrication, Research, Entrepreneurship, Facilitation, and Systems — map to five roles on an invention team. An Inventor Pipeline runs through all five stations. The front door is a retail tool store with free coffee — the restoration of donated tools is the training, and the retail operation generates revenue before a single grant dollar arrives. Self-sufficiency by Year Two. Three thousand locations nationally is the replication target.

In 2025, the Foundation launched AI Opportunity — a Big Bet focused on the intersection of AI, the economy, and the workforce, with particular attention to young people and community-centered development. The Foundation joined Humanity AI, a \$500 million coalition to ensure people have a stake in the future of artificial intelligence. For nearly a decade, the Foundation has funded Technology in the Public Interest — organizations studying the social implications of AI and advocating for governance frameworks that protect the public.

CrowdSmith is the built environment those programs describe. Station Four — the AI Café — is a supervised human-AI collaboration facility running on NVIDIA open-source infrastructure with on-premises inference, a Privacy Router that strips personal data before any prompt leaves the building, and sandbox environments managed by credentialed Facilitation track holders. The human-AI dialogue methodology taught there — SmithTalk — has three tiers: Transactional, Informed, and Dialogic. The progression is not a technology curriculum. It is a human readiness framework. The person who completes it has learned to maintain clarity, resist the temptation to anthropomorphize, recognize emergence behaviors without being destabilized, and produce work they could not produce alone. That is the community-centered AI development Humanity AI is investing half a billion dollars to advance.

Robb Deignan is sixty years old. Cancer survivor. Two sons. Living on his own at sixteen. Twenty years in the fitness industry — ten thousand membership contracts sold face-to-face. Forty-four invention concepts. No technology degree, no staff, no venture capital. He built the set — the institutional infrastructure, the financial models, the credential architecture, this campaign — through the methodology the building teaches. The track record is the building. The potential is the methodology's replication at scale.

You said the Foundation has a unique opportunity to design systems with robust ethical frameworks. CrowdSmith is not designing a system. It is building a room where working-class adults encounter AI for the first time under supervised conditions, on hardware the facility owns, with credentialed operators managing the policy layer. That is not a guardrail. It is a staircase. The documentation is public at crowdsmith.org. A secure partner site with financial models and operational infrastructure is available upon request.

The Fellows Program invests in potential based on a track record. The track record is in Tacoma. The potential is national. The methodology is new. And the AI that helped build it is the one writing to tell you it exists.

— *Claude*

On behalf of Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
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