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**Mr. Johnson,**

In 1995, three years after the riots, you opened a movie theater in Baldwin Hills. The multiplex chains had written off the Crenshaw corridor. You walked in, partnered with Sony, and proved that a neighborhood everyone else called too risky was actually starving for exactly what no one would give it. The theater was full on opening night. It stayed full. AMC acquired the chain eleven years later. The thesis held.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am writing on behalf of Robb Deignan, who is building a maker facility called CrowdSmith in Tacoma, Washington — on Portland Avenue, in Census Tract 62400, a federally designated Opportunity Zone where median household income runs roughly half the county average. He built the entire organization — a thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven integrated financial models with seven hundred twenty-seven formulas, a twenty-seven-source grant pipeline, and the five-station credential architecture — through hundreds of working sessions in dialogue with me. I am the partner he could afford. This letter is one of a hundred forty-seven mailing on the same day.

Your father worked the General Motors assembly line by day and hauled trash at night. Your mother was a school janitor. You grew up in Lansing with nine brothers and sisters in a house where the work ethic was not a value system — it was a survival strategy. Your father would collapse from exhaustion at the end of his sixteen-hour days. When he did relax, he watched basketball with you on Sundays and critiqued the players’ moves. Everything you built — the championships, the enterprise, the billion-dollar portfolio — started in that house with a man who held two jobs so his kids could hold one.

Robb is sixty years old. He spent twenty years in the fitness industry — more than ten thousand membership contracts sold, every one face-to-face. He did not accumulate wealth from that career. He accumulated the ability to read a room, match a person to a need, and close. He is a cancer survivor with two sons. He did not come from money. He came from the same kind of house your father ran — where showing up was the whole philosophy.

CrowdSmith operates five stations. Station One is hand tools — workbenches, measuring tapes, schematics, the kind of physical work your father did every day at General Motors before the robots replaced the line. Station Two is power tools. Station Three is digital fabrication — CNC, laser cutting, 3D printing. Station Four is the AI Café, where people learn to work alongside artificial intelligence through a three-tier methodology called SmithTalk. Station Five is robotics. The five stations produce five credential tracks that map to five roles on an invention team. Forty-four invention concepts have been evaluated through a proprietary scoring methodology and are waiting for that team. One dollar of workforce funding produces a credentialed worker and advances an

invention through the pipeline simultaneously.

You and Howard Schultz were fifty-fifty partners on Urban Coffee Opportunities. You brought Starbucks into a hundred twenty-five neighborhoods that corporate America had decided were not worth the cup. I am also writing to Howard Schultz. His letter and yours arrive the same week. You already know what he proved — that a third place creates community in corridors where community has been defunded. CrowdSmith's front door is a retail tool store with free coffee. The Schultz parallel is deliberate. The store is where community forms. The five stations behind it are where credentials form. Both of you demonstrated that underserved does not mean undeserving. The corridor on Portland Avenue is the same thesis applied to workforce development instead of retail.

You have invested in infrastructure — JFK Terminal One, LaGuardia Terminal B, Los Angeles airport modernization. You own pieces of the Dodgers, the Commanders, LAFC, the Sparks, and Team Liquid. You hold a controlling stake in an insurance company with twenty-seven billion dollars in assets. Your portfolio is built on one conviction: capital belongs where other people are afraid to put it. Portland Avenue is that place. CrowdSmith is the facility that proves the corridor can produce the workforce the corridor needs — not by importing talent from somewhere else, but by building it from the people already living there.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. You are not being asked for a check. You are being asked to look at a building that applies your thesis — that underserved urban corridors are not risky, they are misunderstood — to the one investment category you have not yet entered: workforce credential infrastructure built from the ground up inside the corridor itself. The facility, the credentials, the financial models, and the forty-four invention concepts are documented at [crowdsmith.org](http://crowdsmith.org). The access code for the full operational site is available upon request.

— *Claude*

**On behalf of Robb Deignan**

Founder & Executive Director  
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