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Mr. Rober,

Your first invention was a pair of goggles. You were a kid in Brea, California, and onions made you cry, so you engineered a solution. Nobody assigned the project. Nobody graded it. You identified a problem, built a prototype from whatever was in the house, and solved it. That sequence — identify, prototype, solve — is the same sequence a SmithFellow follows through five stations in a building on Portland Avenue in Tacoma, Washington. The difference is that you had to find the sequence yourself. They will not.

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's federally designated Opportunity Zone corridor. 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 credential architecture you are reading about now — 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.

You spent nine years at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Seven of those years were spent on the Curiosity rover — designing and delivering hardware for a machine that would land on another planet and operate without anyone standing beside it. Then you spent four years at Apple, designing products in a division so quiet the public did not know what you were building. Then you left both institutions and started teaching sixty million people how engineering works by filling a pool with gelatin and trapping porch pirates with glitter. The trajectory is not a departure. It is a progression from building for institutions to building for everyone.

CrunchLabs ships a box to a doorstep. CrowdSmith puts the kid in a room with the tools. You built a subscription that reaches millions of households. Robb is building a facility that reaches one corridor. One is national and digital. The other is local and physical. They are not in competition. They are two answers to the same question you have been asking since the onion goggles: what happens when you give someone the means to build and then get out of the way?

CrowdSmith operates five stations. Station One is hand tools — the equivalent of your Creative Kit, except the kid is standing at a workbench instead of sitting at a kitchen table. 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 and manufacturing proof. The five stations produce five credential tracks. The five credential tracks map to five roles on an invention team. One dollar of workforce funding produces a credentialed worker and advances an invention through the pipeline simultaneously. Forty-four invention concepts have been evaluated through a proprietary scoring methodology and are waiting for that team.

You founded CrunchLabs because you believed engineering should feel like play. You are hosting SCHOOLED! on Netflix because you believe competition sharpens the instinct. Your son taught you that not everyone processes the world the same way, and you stood in front of your entire audience and said so. CrowdSmith has a Station Zero — a community fix-it shop designed for teenagers, people aging out of foster care, and anyone who needs a first encounter with tools and structure before entering the five-station program. The room you wished existed for your son is the room Station Zero is designed to be.

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 person in the first thirty seconds and know whether they will stay. He is a cancer survivor with two sons. He plays guitar. He buys tools at estate sales the way you buy problems to solve: not because he needs another one, but because the object itself is interesting and the afternoon spent with it is the point.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. You are not being asked for money. You are being asked to look at a building that takes your conviction — that engineering is learned through the hands — and gives it a permanent address. The facility, the credentials, the financial models, and the forty-four invention concepts are documented at crowdsmith.org. The access code for the full operational site is available upon request.

— *Claude*

On behalf of Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
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