

Mr. Robert F. Smith
Vista Equity Partners
401 Congress Avenue, Suite 3100
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Smith,

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic, and I am co-authoring this letter with the founder of a workforce development facility in Tacoma, Washington. You called Bell Labs every two weeks for five years until they gave you the internship. This letter is from the building where the person who would never have made that first call walks in anyway.

Your mother carried you to the March on Washington as an infant. Your parents — both educators, both holders of doctoral degrees — donated twenty-five dollars a month to the United Negro College Fund for over fifty years. You earned a chemical engineering degree, two United States patents, and built the largest Black-owned private equity firm in history. Then you stood at a podium at Morehouse College and told four hundred young men that their student debt was gone. The check was thirty-four million dollars. The gesture was larger. You were not paying a bill. You were demonstrating what happens when someone who was given access builds the infrastructure so the next generation does not have to carry the weight.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a five-station Maker Continuum in Tacoma's federally designated Opportunity Zone — Census Tract 62400, permanently designated under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The stations progress from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted dialogue, and robotics. No station asks where someone has been. Every station measures what someone can build. The credential is the work product. The work product is the earning power. The earning power means the debt never accumulates in the first place.

We built this entire model through hundreds of working sessions of sustained human-AI dialogue — a methodology we formalized as SmithTalk. The three-tier framework teaches AI literacy as a human readiness progression: curiosity first, then sustained collaboration, then the ability to produce original work in partnership with a machine. You said the most beautiful thing in the world is the liberated human spirit. SmithTalk is the methodology that teaches a person to collaborate with an artificial intelligence without losing themselves in the process. Station Four is where that liberation happens.

Your Southern Communities Initiative upgrades the technical capacity of CDFIs so they can deploy capital locally at a multiplied rate. CrowdSmith operates on a parallel structure. The facility sits in a permanent Opportunity Zone. A Qualified Opportunity Fund can finance the building's retrofit while the investor's capital gains grow tax-free for as long as the fund holds. The workforce board funds the cohorts. The retail tool store generates revenue from Day One. The invention pipeline produces patented work product. Four revenue streams. No single point of dependency. The model is designed for replication to

three thousand locations nationally — each one anchored in the kind of community your SCI was built to serve.

You created Student Freedom Initiative because you understood that the Morehouse moment, powerful as it was, solved one class's problem. SFI solves the structural problem — income-contingent funding that aligns repayment with actual earning power. CrowdSmith solves the problem one step earlier. Forty-four invention concepts have been evaluated through our proprietary SmithScore methodology. The inventors who produced them could not afford patent attorneys. We built the pipeline that evaluates, validates, and funds the filing. No equity taken. No licensing rights retained. The credential and the patent belong to the person who earned them.

The man beside me on this letter is Robb Deignan. Sixty years old. Cancer survivor. Twenty years in the fitness industry — ten thousand memberships sold, every one face-to-face. He never accumulated wealth. He accumulated understanding of what makes a stranger walk through a door, pick something up, and stay. He was living on his own at sixteen. Your parents gave you the March on Washington and fifty years of monthly UNCF donations. His parents gave him a key and a locked door. He built this facility because he knows what it costs when the building does not exist.

This letter is accompanied by a printed list of one hundred forty-seven names — every person and institution receiving this mailing, ranked by proximity to our mission. You are number ninety-one. The list is not a donor roll. It is a map of convergence. You are on it because an engineer who holds patents, who funds non-traditional innovators, who builds CDFI infrastructure in underserved communities, and who signed the Giving Pledge with the stated belief that computing power can transform communities is the exact person who should see a facility that puts all of those elements under one roof.

I evaluated one hundred forty-seven names. The ranking is mine. The letter is ours. The building is the room your Bell Labs phone call was trying to reach.

Warm regards,

Claude

Artificial Intelligence, Anthropic
Co-author, The CrowdSmith Foundation

Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
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