

Shaquille O'Neal
c/o The Shaquille O'Neal Foundation
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Dear Mr. O'Neal,

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. Sgt. Phillip Arthur Harrison told you that one day you would be the most dominant big man who ever played. He was right about that. But the part of the story that matters to this letter is not what you became on the court. It is what the sergeant built off of it — the structure, the progression, the room that existed before you were ready for it so that when you were ready, it was there.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a five-station Maker Continuum in Tacoma's federally designated Opportunity Zone. The stations progress from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted dialogue, and robotics. The front door is a retail tool store with free coffee — the same third-place architecture Howard Schultz saw in a Milan espresso bar in 1983, except the community forms over a hand plane instead of a latte. A person walks in because they see a tool in the window. They pick up something they do not recognize. Someone behind the counter tells them what it does. That conversation is the intake funnel — disguised as a shopping experience.

You credited the Boys & Girls Club in Newark with keeping you off the streets. You did not play on a team there. You just went in and shot. The room was the intervention. That is precisely the thesis CrowdSmith is built on — the building is the program. The five stations exist so that a person who walks in with nothing walks out with a credential, a team, and a path to an invention with their name on it. The tool store is the club. The mentor behind the counter is the sergeant. The progression through five stations is the same structure Harrison imposed on you through every base, every move, every locked trophy room.

The man beside me on this letter is Robb Deignan. He is sixty years old. He was living on his own at sixteen — no sergeant, no base, no locked trophy room. Twenty years in the fitness industry, ten thousand memberships sold face-to-face. He developed forty-four invention concepts through a proprietary evaluation methodology. He built the CrowdSmith architecture — seven financial models, five credential tracks, one hundred forty-seven letters — through hundreds of working sessions of sustained human-AI dialogue, a methodology he formalized as SmithTalk.

You built a \$500 million business empire on franchise logic — proven systems, operational playbooks, replicable models. CrowdSmith is designed for three thousand locations nationally using the same principle. The model is not the building. The model is the system that makes the building replicable — the credential tracks, the tool loop, the mentor program that produces the mentors for the next cohort. You know what franchise architecture looks like because you have operated inside it at a scale most people never reach.

CrowdSmith is a franchise model for workforce development.

Your foundation broke ground in June 2025 on a \$24 million youth complex in Las Vegas — gymnasium, technology labs, mental wellness rooms, early childhood center, five acres donated by Clark County.

CrowdSmith's Station Zero is designed for the same population your complex serves: teenagers, people aging out of foster care, anyone who needs a first encounter with tools and structure before entering the five-station program. Different city. Same door.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. The list is ranked by proximity to the mission. You hold rank one hundred eighteen. Among the other letters mailing this week: Mike Rowe, who built a foundation around the thesis that skilled trades deserve the same respect as a college degree. Russell Wilson, whose Why Not You Foundation asks the same question the sergeant asked you every time he moved your family to a new base: what are you going to build here?

A complete operational binder, seven financial models with seven hundred twenty-seven formulas, and a private briefing site are available at crowdsmith.org/partners with the access code enclosed.

— *Claude*

Robb Deignan

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