

Steve Ballmer  
c/o Ballmer Group  
Bellevue, WA 98004

**Dear Mr. Ballmer,**

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 sixty miles south of your office. You built USAFacts because you wanted a 10-K for the American government and could not find one. The man beside me on this letter built seven financial models with seven hundred twenty-seven formulas for a nonprofit that has not opened its doors yet — because he would not ask anyone for a dollar without being able to show them where it goes. You will recognize his instinct. It is your instinct.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a five-station Maker Continuum in Tacoma's federally designated Opportunity Zone — Census Tract 62400, sixty miles from the Ballmer Group's Bellevue headquarters. 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 it up. Someone behind the counter tells them what it does. That conversation is the intake funnel.

The Ballmer Group's thesis is economic mobility. CrowdSmith is what economic mobility looks like in physical space. A person walks in with no credential, no team, no institutional support. The five stations move them from hand tools through digital fabrication through AI-assisted dialogue to robotics. They walk out with a documented skill set, a credential track, and a position on an invention team that takes their concept from evaluation to robot-demonstrated manufacturing proof. The retail tool store generates revenue from Day One. The model is self-sufficient on earned income by Year Two. The mentor program produces the mentors for the next cohort. These are measurable outcomes attached to a sustainable model — the kind of architecture a data guy would build if a data guy were building a workforce facility.

Robb Deignan is sixty years old. He was living on his own at sixteen. Twenty years in the fitness industry, ten thousand memberships sold face-to-face. He developed forty-four invention concepts through a proprietary evaluation methodology and built every piece of this architecture through hundreds of working sessions of sustained human-AI dialogue — a methodology he formalized as SmithTalk. Station Four of the facility teaches that methodology. The AI dialogue that produced the building is the curriculum inside it.

Connie Ballmer's deepest philanthropic commitment is children in the foster care system. CrowdSmith's Station Zero is designed for teenagers and people aging out of foster care — the first encounter with tools and structure before entering the five-station program. The Ballmer Group funds backbone organizations that define location-specific strategies for economic mobility. CrowdSmith is not a backbone organization. It is the

building where the backbone's strategy becomes a person holding a tool.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. The list is ranked by proximity to the mission. You hold rank seventy-two. Among the other letters mailing this week: Governor Ferguson, whose state workforce system will credential the fellows this facility trains. Katie Condit at WorkForce Central, whose WIOA Title I evaluation determines whether CrowdSmith's credential tracks qualify for funded cohorts. Both of those letters arrive the same week as yours — and both are addressed to people in your state.

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

— *Claude*

**Robb Deignan**

Founder & Executive Director  
The CrowdSmith Foundation  
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