



# Choose to Move

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **April, 23 2024**

**Slocan BC**—Exciting news for people 55 and older! This **April**, the groundbreaking health and wellness program, Choose to Move, comes to Slocan at the Legion. Choose to Move is a no-cost program designed to support individuals aged 55 and older to boost their physical activity and create meaningful social connections. It equips participants with the resources they need to maintain an active and engaged lifestyle. Created by scientists at the University of British Columbia and offered by the Active Aging Society in partnership with W.E. Graham Community Service Society, Choose to Move is a response to the needs of aging British Columbians. This program stands as a beacon of innovation in health programs for people 55 and older.

Choose to Move is not a fitness class. Unlike traditional programs that adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, Choose to Move recognizes the individuality of each participant. Each participant works one-on-one with a knowledgeable activity coach who supports them to craft an activity plan tailored to preferences and abilities. Then, enrolled individuals can connect with a group of peers for eight dynamic group meetings where they have an opportunity to share goals, stay accountable, and explore a wide range of health and wellness topics together.

Joanie Sims Gould, the Executive Director of the Active Aging Society, and a researcher from the team at the University of British Columbia that created Choose to Move, underscores the program's uniqueness: "Choose to Move isn't just about getting active or making friends; it's about empowering people with the tools to take charge of their health and well-being. It is a free, flexible, sustainable approach that is tailored to each participant's lifestyle, preferences, and needs, whether they are 55 or 95."

What sets Choose to Move apart is its emphasis on choice and flexibility. Participants have the freedom to select activities that resonate with them, eliminating the barriers often associated with traditional fitness programs. Whether it is a walk in the park with a friend, a dance class, or an afternoon of gardening and yard work, in Choose to Move participants meet their health and wellness goals by picking activities that bring them joy and fulfillment. Choose to Move also fosters a supportive community where participants uplift and inspire one another. It is not just about physical activity; it is about forging meaningful connections and enhancing social well-being.

“I feel like I’ve got energy again which is something I haven’t had for a long time. It not only amazes me, it amazes my husband. He hasn’t seen that in me for a long time,” said one past participant. “Choose to Move? Your health and happiness deserve nothing less,” she added.

Thanks to the unwavering support of the Active Aging Society, community partners, and the Province of British Columbia, Choose to Move remains free and accessible to people across the province. Through ongoing evaluation and research conducted by UBC, the program continues to evolve, ensuring its efficacy in enhancing the lives of older adults.

With over 8000 people already experiencing the transformative power of Choose to Move, the program's impact speaks volumes. As it comes to the Slocan Legion on April 23 2024 people 55 and older are invited to embark on a journey of goal setting, action, and vibrant health.

W.E Graham Community Service Society will host a Choose to Move information with the Activity Coach Darrian Kolar on April 23 at the Slocan Legion. To register, visit <https://wegcss.org/> or call 250-355-2484. Choose to Move is a free program supported by the Active Aging Society.

### **Contact Information**

Name: Darrian Kolar

Phone: 250-355-2484

Email: [foodbankmanager@wegcss.org](mailto:foodbankmanager@wegcss.org)

### **About Choose to Move**

Choose to Move is a free and flexible program that provides participants with the motivation and support to become more active. Choose to Move can help participants to integrate activity into daily routine, meet new friends, and make a positive change. Participants receive both individual and group support to develop and stick to a personal activity plan that includes activities they enjoy and can do. Choose to Move is great for anyone age 55 and older that wants to become active. To learn more visit [www.choosetomove.ca](http://www.choosetomove.ca).

### **About WEGCSS**

1001 Harold St/Po Box #10  
Slocan, BC V0G 2C0

Phone: (250) 355-2484

BC Registered Non-profit Society: Society# S-37681  
Revenue Canada Designated Charitable Organization: Business# 886669142RR0001

Founded December 3, 1997

## **WHAT**

We operate:

- Fully licensed Child Care Centre – Valhalla Children’s Centre
- Community Wi-Fi access, Computer Learning Centre & Fab Lab
- Youth Centre on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Food Bank – Slocan Valley Food Cupboard (associate member of Food Banks BC & Canada). First and Third Thursday of every month. We distribute over 100 Holiday Hampers to local families every year.
- Food Bank Garden growing healthy fresh produce to support food bank programs.
- Tenacity Skatepark
- Space for Community Meetings and other Community Events.
- Youth Mental Health support

We administer:

- A Ministry of Children and Family Development contract, providing Art Therapy for children and youth in schools in the valley.
- Strong Start program in three schools in Slocan Valley, funded by SD8.
- Slocan Valley Early Childhood Community Advisory Council
- Slocan Valley Youth Network, through Columbia Basin Trust.
- Kootenay Restorative Justice
- Senior’s support services through United Way Better at Home and other programs
- Career and Employment Counselling provided by the Itinerant Service office of Kootenay Career Development Society

## **WHY**

### Our Mandate:

WE Graham Community Service Society provides programs and services to residents of the rural Slocan Valley. Where possible, WEGCSS also refers people to the services of other local organizations.

In creative and ongoing partnerships with regional services and organizations, we provide inclusive and accessible opportunities in support of a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community. We strive to remain responsive to the current needs of Slocan Valley residents and to enhance the quality of life for all.

Mission Statement:

Building resilience and vibrancy in our communities.

**HOW**

The WEGCSS team operates with direction from our volunteer board of 7 community members. As a nonprofit society continuous effort is made to access funding bodies and private donors to keep our facility in working order and fund both new and longstanding programs.

WEGCSS has a core staff of 2 full-time positions, plus 7 part-time program coordinators, 1 Early Childhood Educator, and 15 - 20 part-time positions supporting program delivery and operations. With that team, plus a few key contractors and some very dedicated and skilled volunteers WEGCSS maintains a wide array of essential community services not otherwise available in the Slocan Valley.

**Website:** [wegcss.org](http://wegcss.org)

**Facebook:** @wegcss

**Instagram:** [wegrahamcommunityss](https://www.instagram.com/wegramcommunityss)

**About the Active Aging Society**

The Active Aging Society champions the physical, social, and mental health of people 55 and older in British Columbia. We are guided by evidence to scale and sustain health-promoting innovations that work. For over a decade, we have provided solutions to keep British Columbians mobile and socially connected. A network of community-based organizations, researchers, community leaders, and delivery partners are central to our work. We support individuals across British Columbia and beyond to become active and connected for health so that they can enjoy independent, mobile living. Learn more: [activeagingsociety.org](http://activeagingsociety.org).