

STRONGSTART IN THE 55

Jan. 16, 2020

Link: <https://squamish.ca/yourgovernment/news/squamish-strongstart-program-to-be-hosted-temporarily-at-the-55-during-upgrades/>

Squamish StrongStart program to be hosted temporarily at The 55 during upgrades

StrongStart BC, the provincial play-based early learning program, will operate out of The 55 Activity Centre beginning in January. Sea to Sky Community Services will continue to operate the program and The 55 will be used until required upgrades are made within their current space, anticipated to be May 2020. The children's program will be accommodated without affecting existing 55+ programming.

"This as an opportunity for the District to lend support to a critical early childhood education program that benefits a wide range of families by offering space currently not being used to its full capacity," says District of Squamish Mayor Karen Elliott. "We also recognize the importance of The 55 Activity Centre to many seniors in our community, and will continue to ensure it remains an inviting and inclusive space for them to enjoy. We hope everyone sees the benefit of sharing this space temporarily and ensuring the youngest members of our community also see no interruption in their programming while necessary upgrades are made to their space."

Funded by School District 48, StrongStart BC is a free drop-in program that provides a wide range of families with early childhood development support.

The 55 Activity Centre was re-positioned in 2017 with expanded hours and a broader programming focus to better serve Squamish's diverse adult population at what was considered an under-utilized facility. While daytime programming has remained exclusive to the needs of the 55+ population, evening and weekend programming was expanded to accommodate all adults 19+. There is still opportunity to achieve greater attendance levels at the facility.

Learn more about [The 55 Activity Centre](#) including hours, programs and location.

Learn more about [StrongStart BC](#).

December 23, 2019

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Comments

- Paul W Lancaster Jan 15, 2020 10:41 PM (16 hours ago)

This was a very disruptive and apparently uncaring gesture directed by our mayor. Seniors feel very young children + babies & baby sitters create a horrible noise and can never mix successfully with old, often bewildered seniors that favour quiet space to conduct their reading, puzzle solving and billiard game play. They cannot withstand the unbearable noise and general mess in the lounge area caused by baby prams and outdoor garments festooned on the chairs and billiard tables.

- Nancy C Moore Jan 9, 2020 5:05 PM (5 days ago)

Give us back our SENIOR CENTER!!!

- Leone Braby Jan 9, 2020 3:47 PM (5 days ago)

Just the thin edge of the wedge....

Why no consultation? Because the program, is just another name for "day care" and using our facility, our SENIOR

Centre is a way to pander to the voters. I don't think the District is ignorant of the agreement made ..they assume we will just have to accept...which is what has happenedso what if we the people complain...it's fait accompli.

We seniors are being marginalized...again. Soon the Centre will be just called the Activity Centre, no 55.... Senior activities will be reduced or eliminated and seniors will have to pay to rent space in the building if we want to organize any senior related activities.

Shame on this council, and Shame on the Mayor for offering our space to make herself look good...self aggrandizement...." gal grand" NOT!!!

And so what can be done?? Lotsa complaints and angst, do we have no recourse?

- Phyllis Carter Jan 8, 2020 10:38 PM (6 days ago)

As the point person for the Quilts and Crafts programme, I have called out [the District] for lack of consultation and ignorance of the agreement with seniors in 2017- why else would anyone one break the agreement. Then I hear by a truthful source that the Mayor in all her wisdom, felt it necessary to help out the School Board by telling them of our unused space. At least 3 groups were inconvenienced by being squashed into a smaller space or having to change the time of their classes. I am irate, as I don't think they have a legal mandate to put school board programmes into the Seniors' Building, that was built with seniors in mind. It is not suitable to the young age group at all.

I am not against the Head Start programme, just not in our Seniors' Building.

This creeping undermining of our senior center, by the Town Council and the Management of the Recreational Services must be stopped. Idea! If money is needed cut the dead wood from these services. We are the tax payers that pay your salaries and as seniors have not seen any improvements from the money spent.

- Zbigniew Jan Stachura Jan 8, 2020 9:35 PM (6 days ago)

I am very disappointed with District decision on the subject without consulting seniors who are benefiting from the programs at the Activity 55 Centre. I am sure there were some other options to implement the program. I think District went an easy way to push the issue.

Regards Zbigniew Jan Stachura

- Michael Sherlock Jan 7, 2020 4:44 PM (7 days ago)

Happy New Year?

Not if you are a Senior and are fortunate (?) enough to live in Squamish!

Once again, seniors in Squamish are pushed aside by Squamish District officers and council.

We used to have a Senior Centre here until Council struck the "offensive" title from the name. Apparently, the rest of Squamish was afraid to enter, in case they might be suddenly afflicted with old age should they do so. The Recreation Department and Council

probably thought that, if they made it sound like it was a night club, it would have people flocking to get in. (Incidentally, they did not)

At a District meeting in 2017, the Squamish Senior Centre was renamed. The word 'Senior' was removed from the building entrance.

Remember... this is a facility that was designated to be used by the Seniors of Squamish, by Solterra Development Group, as part of the agreement to allow them to build the Strata complex that currently occupies the site.

This blatant name change was made to enable the Recreation Department and District to be able to change the usage to suit their own needs and eliminate needs and input from the designated users, the SENIOR population of Squamish.

Council renamed it "The 55" and agreed to maintain the usage to be exclusively for the 55+ age bracket during the hours 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. on weekdays. Any other groups would be able to rent the use of the facilities after 4.

This program for PRE-pre-Kindergarten age children is a blatant contradiction to that agreement.

The council announcement states that it will in no way impact any of the senior programs. This is not true! Several senior programs are, and have, been operating in that room for several years. Now they have been TOLD they will not be able to have the room now. They have been moved to another, less suitable room.

Imagine, if we were to tell the council that they could not use the council chamber for their meetings as we want to put the children's program in there? They can hold the meeting in the Foyer though.

Squamish is fortunate to have many natural facilities to enjoy that will help keep many people fit and healthy.

However, for those who are lucky enough to grow old, (some don't get that opportunity) these activities are often outside of the scope of what they can participate in. Our council chooses to ignore this group. Seniors' needs have to be considered more, so they can grow old with dignity and respect. They need a facility like this to enjoy. To have a place they can go to meet friends. To socialize. To stay healthy. To enjoy their senior years. Surely, they deserve it.

Our children have many facilities to enjoy. Think about it... They have Kindergarten to prepare them for elementary school, Pre-Kindergarten half-day classes to prepare for Kindergarten, and now, do they really need a PRE-Pre-Kindergarten too?

I love kids, but do we have to steal from the seniors for them to have a good life? I don't think so. Let's take care of EVERYONE!

When will our council start...

Respecting our seniors?

Stop lying to them?

Stop ignoring them?

And stop pretending they care when it comes round to election time!

- Marilyn Clark Jan 8, 2020 10:37 PM (6 days ago)

I agree with everything that Mike Sherlock has to say. It seems that the District doesn't want us to have a place to socialize, participate in programs etc. It looks & seems like the

District don't want us to be there or have usage of the place. As a matter of fact I don't like the name they now call our Senior's Centre . I hope that they find a different place for the children.

- Andrea Gailus Jan 6, 2020 3:50 PM (8 days ago)

No program space already occupied by groups during the hours of 9 - 4 should be bumped. The space is first and foremost for 55 and up during the day. Please find another space for StrongStart. It is an important program for toddlers and is NOT appropriate to have it at the 55 and cancel already active groups.

- Bill Berg Jan 3, 2020 2:19 PM (11 days ago)

Supporting Child Education is a positive initiative and should be supported.

Yet when it takes place in a location at a time that is exclusively reserved, by Councils written policy, for Senior activities it is wrong.

It is wrong when it happens without the Seniors / Users having any input in the decision and how it effects them.

The Idea that You can have an other time, after the decision has been made, is just not good enough.

Consultation ahead of time would be a better option, which at this facility has never happened. You might instruct Staff to try it.

Just consider if the roles were reversed would You even think of acting this way.