


An aerial photograph of a lush green forested valley. A river or stream flows through the center of the valley. In the foreground, a person wearing a plaid shirt and a cap stands with their back to the camera, looking out over the forest. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

“PEACE IN THE PARKS”:
THE PLACE OF PARKS AND NATURAL
PLACES IN PUBLIC HEALTH
PALLIATIVE CARE

HPHP Forum, CPHA Conference,
May 2nd, 2019, Ottawa, ON, Canada

A person wearing a plaid shirt and a hat is walking away from the camera on a dirt path that winds through a field of tall grass. The scene is captured from a high angle, looking down at the person and the path.

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SOCIETY

ALBERTA PARKS

EVERYONE BELONGS

OUTSIDE



ALBERTA PARKS AND MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

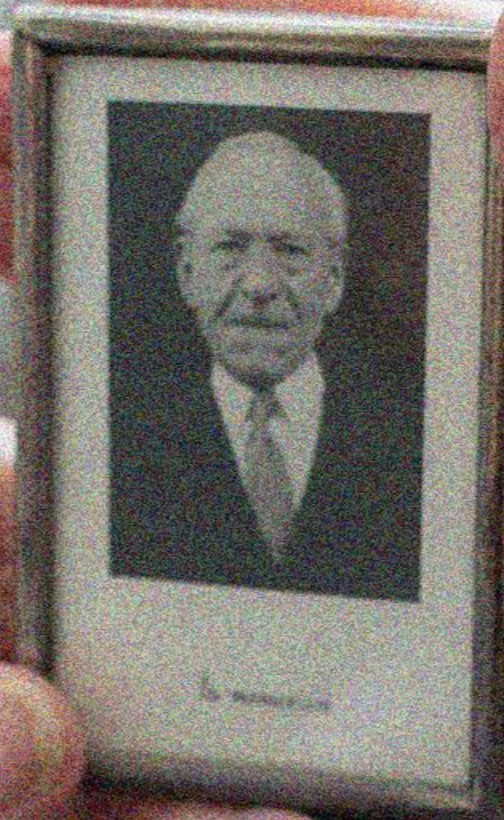
WHY THIS STUDY?



lifetime of experiences
policy gap



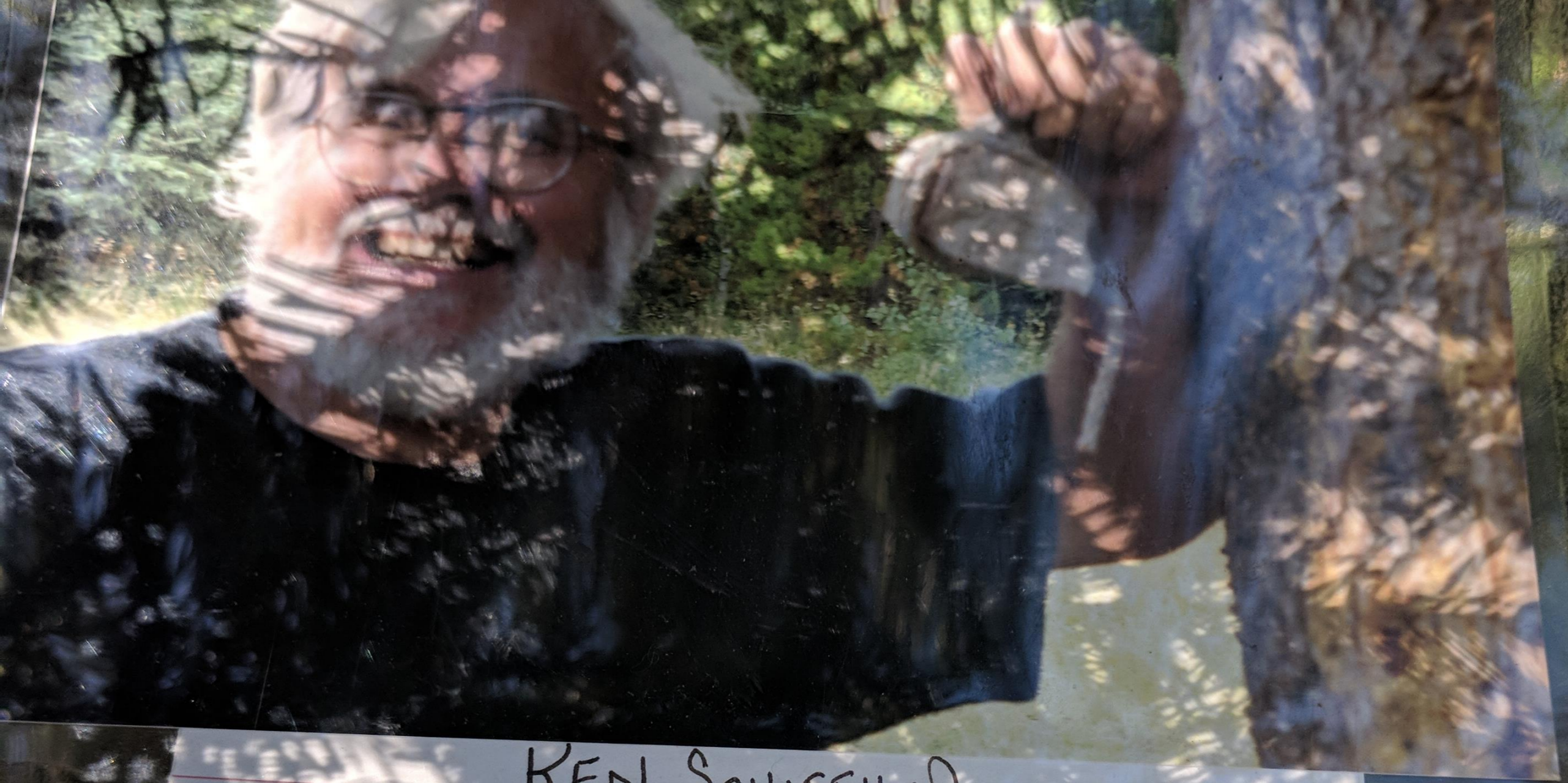
lifespan health promotion
research gap





Susan Heidi Matthews





KEN SCHIFFNER

FEB 27, 1948 TO FEB 10, 2018

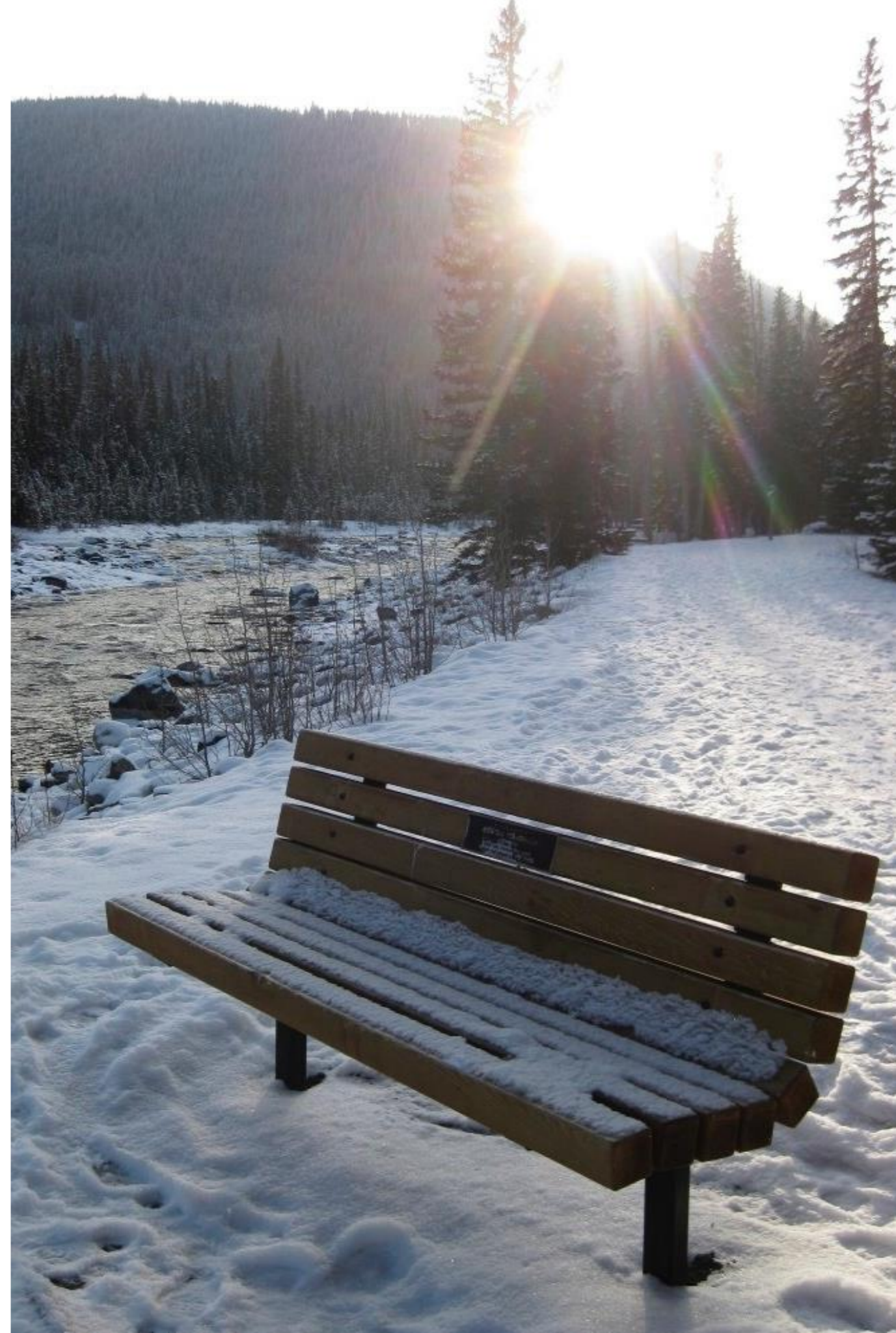
MY BELOVED TWIN BROTHER, KEN, FELL
HERE AND DIED ON A VERY COLD -21°C
AND HEAVY SNOW DAY SATURDAY
EARLY MORNING WHILE JOGGING IN THE
WEASELHEAD HE LOVED. HE JOGGED HERE
EVERY SECOND DAY FOR SEVERAL YEARS
KEN P.





RESEARCH DESIGN

- Literature Review
- Online survey
- Caregiver and palliative patient interviews
- Narrative analysis
- Informing policy and program design



DATA

118 surveys
(descriptive statistics)

15 individual interviews
(narrative analysis)



SURVEY RESULTS

Parks can provide

91% physical

92% emotional

93% spiritual

comfort at end-of-life



SURVEY RESULTS

83% reward of visiting a park or natural place is worth it for someone at end-of-life, despite the risk involved

92% would like to have end-of-life experiences in parks and nature



“It’s like you have this pet shark you really love, and it eats your buddy. How do you come to terms with that?”

NATURE
CONNECTS
US TO
DEATH



“Here’s a guy that lived 93 years and spent most of his life outdoors and has a real affinity and connection to the land.”



DEATH CONNECTS
US TO NATURE

“We get in touch with our grief. Our grief is always under the surface. When we come here, we let go.”



NATURE TEACHES
US TO GRIEVE

PEACE IN THE PARKS

NEXT STEPS: PROGRAM & INQUIRY

- Eco-social vs. Medical Approach
- Development
- <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/guided-walks-help-grieving-families-cope-with-loss-1.3468967>
- Communication
- Collaboration



PEACE IN THE PARKS

RURAL PALLIATIVE CARE

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/DKLSRZHWNZK](https://youtu.be/dklsrzhwnzk)

