

PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

Dr. Alan Cockerill

alan.cockerill@ejr.com.au

Phone: (07) 3278 4698 (+61 7 3278 4698)

Mobile: 0404 163 907 (+ 61 404 163 907)

<http://www.ejr.com.au/media>

Tales from a Ukrainian village give insight into Ukrainian values and the experience of war

Moving stories by the eminent Ukrainian educator and children's writer, Vasyl Sukhomlynsky, have been translated into English.

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, 17 February 2025 –

When Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's village was liberated from Nazi occupation in 1944, he returned to help the members of his community rebuild their shattered lives. He himself had nearly lost his life on the battlefield, and his young wife and their baby had been killed by a Gestapo officer. Many children in the region had lost one or both of their parents, and some children had been maimed when their curiosity led them to pick up unexploded munitions in the fields near their homes.

Sukhomlynsky devised a holistic and therapeutic system of education that restored these young people's childhoods and enabled them to thrive. He taught them how to support each other and give support to their parents and others in the community. Sukhomlynsky's system of education involved spending time outdoors in the fields and forests near his school. It also involved storytelling and teaching children values such as empathy, compassion, courage, endurance, self-discipline, honesty and respect.

Sukhomlynsky and his students often composed stories together, and Sukhomlynsky wrote hundreds of stories to teach children values. He compiled an anthology of such stories, for children of various ages, from pre-school to senior secondary school. A collection of over 800 of these stories has now been translated into English under the title *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*. The stories give us insights into what life was like in rural Ukraine during the years following World War II. Some of the stories for older children also give heartrending accounts of what people went through during the war.

In many respects, life in rural Ukraine still resembles village life in Sukhomlynsky's time, so Sukhomlynsky's stories have not lost their relevance. The values that Sukhomlynsky taught his students were based to a large extent on folk customs and values that had endured for centuries and are still taught to children in Ukraine today. Indeed, Sukhomlynsky's stories are frequently included in Ukrainian textbooks, and are still used by teachers.

Sukhomlynsky's stories have even been used to bolster the morale of troops fighting on the front line in the current war. One of the book's translators, Nataliya Bezslova, narrates how her friend

recorded selections of Sukhomlynsky's stories and sent them to a unit on the frontline. They had some therapeutic value even there.

The stories are accompanied by Sukhomlynsky's reflections on how to teach values to children, based on his decades of experience as a schoolteacher and principal. The combined effect of the reflections and stories is to prompt the reader to reflect on their own values and engage in an internal dialogue with Sukhomlynsky. The book is intended primarily for teachers and parents, who will be inspired to share some of the stories with the children in their lives.

The book

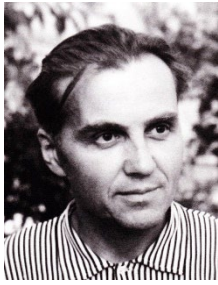
Vasyl Sukhomlynsky. *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children* (EJR Publishing, Brisbane, 2024, ISBN 978-0-6455154-2-8, Au\$44.99) is a collection of over 800 stories and ethical homilies from rural Ukraine.

5 Points of Interest about the Book:

1. Sukhomlynsky's stories are set in rural Ukraine in the aftermath of World War II and give insights into the history and culture of a country that is once again under siege. (e.g. 'Put that letter in the drawer' (p. 184), 'A grandson's request' (p. 291), 'A hut in the forest' (p. 324))
2. Sukhomlynsky is a talented writer. He is capable of making a strong impact in a story that is only a page or two in length. (e.g. 'Dad came home' (p. 183), 'Straw hats' (p.326))
3. A key feature of Sukhomlynsky's approach to education was the conscious fostering of the personal quality of empathy. The stories in this book often show great psychological insight into the inner worlds of children, parents and grandparents. (e.g. 'A smile' (p. 301), 'Mariika's thoughts' (p. 319), 'Why a mother ran from the field' (p. 179), 'The oriole' (p. 128), 'The wooden stork' (p. 185))
4. The system of education developed by Sukhomlynsky at his combined primary and secondary school was deeply embedded in the natural environment. Students spent a great deal of time outdoors observing nature and interacting creatively with it. Sukhomlynsky and his staff educated their students to be responsible custodians of the natural environment, to plant trees, to guard against erosion, to improve soil fertility, and to protect vegetation and wildlife. Caring for the natural environment is one of the key values illustrated in many of the stories in this book.
5. Sukhomlynsky's books have been read by millions of educators around the world, but he remains relatively unknown in the West. This translation joins two other major books by Sukhomlynsky that have been translated into English by the Australian scholar Alan Cockerill, who has made it a personal mission to bring Sukhomlynsky's educational legacy to readers in English-speaking countries.

###

About the Author:



Vasyl Sukhomlynsky (1918-1970) was a school principal, a prolific writer, and a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. From a school in rural Ukraine, where he was principal from 1948 until his death in 1970, Sukhomlynsky's influence spread throughout the Soviet Union and beyond. In dozens of books and hundreds of articles, all based on his own practical experience, Sukhomlynsky describes a holistic approach to the education of global citizens.

About the Translators



Alan Cockerill has worked as a teacher, translator, and researcher. He has a background in Russian Language studies and was awarded a Ph.D. in 1994 for his study of Sukhomlynsky's educational legacy. His book about Sukhomlynsky, *Each One Must Shine*, was published by Peter Lang in New York in 1999, and has since been republished in Australia and South Korea. He has published numerous articles about Sukhomlynsky and has translated two of Sukhomlynsky's most famous works, *My Heart I Give to Children* and *Our School in Pavlysh*.

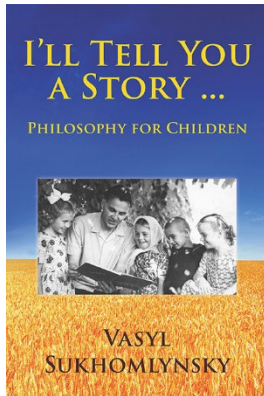


Nataliya Bezslova holds a Master of Information, library sciences, from the University of Toronto, Canada, as well as a Master of Education with specialization in Ukrainian linguistics from Ukraine. She lives in Toronto, Canada. She has worked as a professional law clerk, a political journalist, a teacher, and a library assistant. With a background in linguistics, pedagogy, journalism and law, her areas of interests and specialization include library academic research, legal, government and general research, and translations from the Ukrainian and Russian languages into English.



Berta Karaim holds a Bachelor of Education (Primary) and Bachelor of Arts from Monash University, majoring in Literary Studies with a minor in German Studies. With a passion for languages and a heritage rooted in Eastern Europe, Berta Karaim speaks and reads several Slavic languages. Her contribution to this translation emerged from a work-integrated learning elective in 2018-2019, allowing her to combine linguistic knowledge with a keen interest in educational best practices.

About the Book



Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children* (EJR Publishing, Brisbane, 2024, ISBN 978-0-6455154-2-8, Au\$44.99) is a collection of over 800 ethical tales for children of varying ages, from preschool to senior secondary, by the eminent Ukrainian educator and children's writer Vasyl Sukhomlynsky. The stories, which paint a picture of village life in post-war Ukraine, are accompanied by Sukhomlynsky's reflections on teaching values to children. The stories were written for children of various ages, from preschool through to senior secondary school. They include tales about plants and animals, descriptions of natural beauty, vivid accounts of human relationships in families, at school, and in the broader community, and heartrending scenes from the war years.

Review Copies and Media Interviews:

For a review copy of *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*, or to arrange an interview with Sukhomlynsky scholar and translator Alan Cockerill, please email alan.cockerill@ejr.com.au or phone him on 0404 163 907. A pdf edition of the book can be sent by email. If requesting a hard copy, please provide a postal address.

If you would like to receive this information as a Word document, please send your request to the above email address.

Media Kit available for download from <http://www.ejr.com.au/media> .

