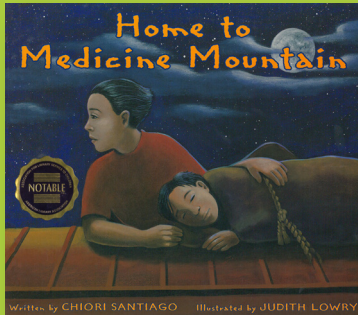


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Home to Medicine Mountain

written by Chiori Santiago

illustrated by Judith Lowry

### About the Book

**\*Reading Level:** Grade 3-4

**Interest Level:** Grades 3-5

**Guided Reading Level:** P

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**  
4.1/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** 620L

\*Reading level based on the  
Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** United States History,  
Siblings, Identity/Self Esteem/  
Confidence, Responsibility,  
Overcoming Obstacles, Native  
American Interest, Home, Heroism,  
Grandparents, Friendship, Families,  
Environment/Nature, Dreams  
& Aspirations, Discrimination,  
Childhood Experiences and  
Memories, Persistence/Grit, Self  
Control/Self Regulation, California,  
Collaboration, Conflict resolution,  
Courage, Education, History,  
People In Motion, Pride, Protest,  
Moving to a New Area, Adventure,  
Escape, Love

### SYNOPSIS

Two young brothers are separated from their family and sent to live in a government-run Indian residential school in the 1930s—an experience shared by generations of Native American children throughout North America. At these schools, children were forbidden to speak their Indian languages and made to unlearn their Indian ways. Sadly, they were often not able to go home to their families for summer vacation.

Native American artist Judith Lowry based this story on the experiences of her father and her Uncle Stanley. Judith and author Chiori Santiago tenderly relate how Stanley and Benny Len found their way home by train one summer. Inspired by their dreams of home and the memories of their grandmother's stories, the boys embark on an adventurous journey from the harsh residential school to their triumphant welcome home at Susanville, California, in the shadow of Yo-Tim Yamne (Medicine Mountain).



## BACKGROUND

### Note from Illustrator Judith Lowry

“This book is based on a true story.

My people have lived in the mountains of northern California for many centuries. They belong to the Mountain Maidu and the Hamawi Pit-River tribes. In the old days, they hunted deer and gathered roots, vegetables and acorns in the beautiful baskets they made. Everything they needed to make a good life was around them.

The lives of my people changed in many ways after European settlers came. One change was that Indian children were taken to boarding schools to live apart from their families for the entire school year. These schools were created especially for Indian children with the idea that they needed to unlearn their Indian ways and live as the settlers did.

My grandparents went to these schools and so did their children, including my uncle Stanley and my dad, who was called “Benny Len.” Their school in Riverside was hundreds of miles from their home in Susanville near Yo-Tim Yamne (Medicine Mountain). Although the school paid for children to take the train to get there, it did not always pay to send them home for summer vacation. This is the story of how my dad and uncle found their way home one summer in the 1930s, when they were very young.”

—Judith Lowry

### Native American Boarding Schools

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, a nonprofit under the laws of the Navajo Nation, states that there were over 350 boarding schools all across the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. By 1925, this affected more than 60,000 children and their families (<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/>).

The United States government instituted these schools especially for American Indian children with the idea that they needed to unlearn their Indian ways and live as the settlers did. According to the Library of Congress, the purpose of these schools was to make Indian children patriotic and productive citizens. The motto “Kill the Indian... Save the Man” originated from the army officer who first founded the schools to deal with “the Indian problem” (<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865>). The days in these schools followed military-like schedules and discipline, and children were mostly taught job training like carpentry for boys and housekeeping for girls. As in *Home to Medicine Mountain*, children were not allowed to speak in their Indian languages, and their long hair was cut short.

Winner of the American Book Award and named an American Library Association Notable Book by the Association for the Library Service to Children, *Home to Medicine Mountain* provides young readers with a glimpse into life for Native American children forced to attend boarding schools for American Indian children.

For more information about boarding schools for American Indians boarding schools, consult the Library of Congress’s (LOC) Teacher’s Guide on Assimilation through Education at [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/assimilation/pdf/teacher\\_guide.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/assimilation/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf), the blog at the National Museum of the American Indian (<https://americanindian.si.edu>), and the National Indian Education Association flipbook on Native Nations and American Schools at <http://www.niea.org/nieaflipbook/mobile/index.html#p=8>.

For more books and resources about boarding schools for American Indians, see the list divided by age group at the American Indians in Children’s Literature blog (<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2008/02/as-more-resources-and-books-are.html>).



## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## CONTENT SPECIFIC:

tribes, acorns, baskets, settlers, boarding schools, Indian, uniforms, barefoot, marched, dormitories, English, Navajo, cots, cub, healing, herbs, clap sticks, munmuni, yo'koli, maple bark, spirit, boxcar, cradleboard

## ACADEMIC

centuries, boulders, restless, cranky, comforting, stiff, scratchy, homesick, daydreaming, punished, matron, boiling, snug, drifting, capes, tassels, tiptoed, shimmy, creaking, yawned, hunched, rumbled, cleverness, courage

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 5 and 6 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation. You may want to:

- Ask students what experiences they've had with homesickness. Have them try to identify what makes home special, what feelings they encountered, and what actions they took when feeling homesick.
- Think about the title. Ask students why they think the book is called *Home to Medicine Mountain*.
- Show students primary source images of Native Americans when they arrived at boarding school and after they attended for a while. Two such images are <http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/34016> and <http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/34014>, from the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Explain that the students are going to be reading a story about a government-run boarding school for Native Americans. Have students make a T-chart of things they notice and things they wonder.
- Ask students what they know about boarding schools. What images come to their mind when they hear the term?  
Begin with a conversation with students about culturally responsive language when referring to Native People. You may want to write the following on chart paper (taken from <http://www.niea.org/nieaflipbook/mobile/index.html#p=7>):
  - o Native American and Indian American are often used interchangeably.
  - o There are 567 federally-recognized tribes within the United States, each with their own distinct culture, traditions, and language.
  - o Tribal affiliation is important to Native peoples and should be the primary descriptor when referencing a particular culture or people.
  - o The term “tribe” is often used as a general descriptor when



referencing a particular culture or people. For example, Simon J. Ortiz is an Acoma writer.

o American Indian (or Alaskan Native) is a term used in federal government policy and research to refer specifically to indigenous peoples of the United States. Some Native people prefer to use this term.

devastating and detrimental long-lasting effects

- how the United States government was responsible for the atrocities inflicted upon American Indian children after being forced to attend boarding schools

Encourage students to consider why the author, Chiroi Santiago, would want to share this story with young people.

## Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 2, Craft & Structure, Strands 5 and 6, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Read the title aloud. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, map, illustrator's note, illustrations, and copyright/about the author and illustrator page.

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Benny Len changes throughout the story
- what happens at the boarding school in Riverside
- what effects the boarding school had and still has on American Indians
- how Benny Len deals with homesickness
- how loved ones can help in times of stress and need
- the implications of American Indian children being sent to boarding schools and their

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Who is Stanley?
2. Where does Benny Len have to go?
3. What does Benny Len have to wear?
4. How does Benny Len get in trouble at school?
5. What are some of the things the children learned at school?
6. How long does Benny Len go to school?
7. What does Benny Len dream of?
8. How is time measured differently at school and at Grandmother's house?
9. What chores did Benny Len used to do at Grandmother's house while she gathered herbs?





10. What is the bear dance?
11. When does the bear dance take place?
12. Why can't Benny Len and Stanley go home?
13. What is something Benny Len does for fun at school?
14. What does Benny Len really want?
15. How does Stanley help Benny Len?
16. Where is Benny Len's home?
17. How do the boys escape?
18. What are some physical landforms the boys pass on their way home?
19. Who is the first family member to see the boys when they return home? How does the family react?
20. How would you describe Benny Len and Stanley?
21. Do Benny Len and Stanley go back to the boarding school?
5. What events do you think the author and illustrator left out of this story? Why? What is noticeably absent in the school's lessons?
6. There are only two full-page spreads in this book. One is when Benny Len is dreaming about the bear dance, and the other is near the end of the story when the boys are on the train. Why do you think Judith Lowry chose these two parts to showcase in full-page spreads?
7. What changes for Benny Len and Stanley after that first trip home?
8. How does Chiori Santiago develop the themes of family and dreams?
9. Why do you think Benny Len, Stanley, and the other Native American children had to go to boarding school? Why do you think the government would only pay for their train fares to the school but not back home?
10. How would you describe Benny Len and Stanley's journey home?
11. What does the title *Home to Medicine Mountain* mean to you?
12. How does Benny Len change from the beginning of the story to the end?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Why do you think the author, Chiori Santiago, doesn't give the teacher a name?
2. How does Chiori Santiago describe the school? Benny Len's home? Why does she use these words? What effect do they have on the reader?
3. How would you describe the mood of this story?
4. Why do you think the narrator is 3rd person following Benny Len's perspective? How would the story change if the narrator followed Stanley's perspective?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, strand 9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is one universal message you could take from this book? Think about Chiori Santiago's



and Judith Lowry's intentions for writing the book. What do you think they wanted to tell their readers?

2. Make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections to the world can you make with this story? Where else have you heard of children being forced from their homes (past or present)?
3. What is one big thought you have after reading this book? Think about Benny Len's struggle to adjust to boarding school and how he finally makes peace with it. What would you tell a younger sibling about it?
4. Native American children were forced into boarding schools with the mindset "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." How does this story show this mindset? What is your reaction to it?

### ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader. Spanish-speaking students may read the story in Spanish while an English-speaking student could read the English version.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have

students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.

- Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about *Home to Medicine Mountain*.
  5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
  6. Make an audio recording of the book and invite students to listen to it as they follow along with the text.
  7. Complete frequent checks of understanding.
  8. Read aloud a sentence and have students repeat the sentence after you, pointing to each word as they speak.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3, and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 5-6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others



and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following activities to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of *Home to Medicine Mountain*:

- Identify emotional language. Throughout *Home to Medicine Mountain*, Chiori Santiago uses many words that deal with feelings. If you're reading the story aloud, have students raise their hands when they hear these words or record them in some way. A few examples include *comforting*, *homesick*, *wished*, *crying*, and *snug*.
- Have students illustrate the strongest emotion they felt when reading *Home to Medicine Mountain* and then explain why they chose to draw the image they did along with how it relates to the story.
- Assign each student or small group of students a different page in the book. For each page, students should identify the emotions Benny Len is feeling. Share a feelings wheel with students, such as <http://feelingswheel.com>. Have them choose one word from each layer of the wheel. Then, go on a book walk to retell the story by having students share the feeling words for each assigned page and explain why they chose the words they did to represent Benny Len's feelings.
- Have students discuss how they would feel if they were Benny Len and forced to attend such a boarding school. What negative feelings would they encounter, and how would they deal with them? Do they think they would feel any positive emotions? If so, what would they be?

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value

evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

- Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, and Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of

(Language Standards, Knowledge of Language, Strand 3, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 5 and 6)

1. Compare and Contrast Using Top Hat. Students can read another book about government-run schools that Native Americans were forced to attend and then compare and contrast it with *Home to Medicine Mountain*. An example title is *Rattlesnake Mesa* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/rattlesnake-mesa>). Then, students can fill in the graphic organizer top hat (<https://www.romoland.net/cms/lib/CA01902709/Centricity/Domain/355/BlankTopHatOrganizer.pdf>) to identify the differences in the boarding schools and the similarities in the two books. Challenge them to identify at least three objects/ assignments/expectations to compare,
2. Read other books written and illustrated by Native Americans. Include this reading of *Home to Medicine Mountain* in a thematic study featuring Native American literature featuring Native authors and illustrators. Example books you can read include *This Land is My Land* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/this-land-is-my-land>), *The People Shall Continue* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-people-shall-continue>), *Bears Make Rock Soup* (<https://>



★ **Kirkus:** “Poetic drawings illustrate both the excitement of the adventure and the spiritual side of the boys’ life, as the elements of their culture call to them. Winning readers’ sympathies from the outset is the comparison of the clocks, classrooms, and uniforms of boarding school with indigenous customs.... The ending is perfect.”

★ **News from Native California:** “A great story, well told, and the illustrations are colorful and compelling—a children’s book that adults will also treasure.”

★ **School Library Journal:** “The artist and author have brought a little-known chapter of history to children’s attention, and have done so in an appealing way. The colorful paintings and intelligent text tell a loving story.... A welcome title.”

[www.leeandlow.com/books/bears-make-rock-soup](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/bears-make-rock-soup)), and *Crazy Horse’s Vision* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/crazy-horse-s-vision>). What are the different characteristics of these books in terms of their portrayal of Native people? What are the similarities? What themes do these books have in common? How are the messages conveyed through the words and illustrations? Students can complete a matrix on what they learn about Native Americans using categories such as geography, education, traditions, painful experiences/fights/discrimination, and art. Push students to identify individuals and individual tribes in their charts so as not to oversimplify Native Americans as a group. For more resources about Native Americans in literature, visit *American Indians in Children’s Literature* <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com> and *Oyate* (<http://oyate.org>). Have students search the classroom library and their home libraries for books on Native Americans and search the titles on the above sites to see what Native Americans say about them. Are they recommended? Do they present Native Americans accurately?

3. Play with Figurative Language. *Home to Medicine Mountain* includes many memorable words and phrases. For example, “...the train’s wheels singing a sad song,” and “...the wheels beat a rhythm” are examples of personification. You can have students find and act out the personification. Another author’s craft in this book is the use of similes, such as “...the train stopped in a place as flat and hot as a giant’s griddle.” You can have students find their favorites and draw a picture of what these similes look like to them or write their own!
4. Write a Letter Home. Pretending to be Benny Len, students can write a letter home to their grandmother, telling her about school and what they miss about home. Encourage students to include at least three details from the story.

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, and Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)





1. Geography Skills. Have students retrace Benny Len and Stanley's Journey using the map in the front of the book. Challenge students to identify other places on the map that are not labeled.
2. Primary Source Analysis. Show students primary source images from the government-run boarding schools. Some include <http://home.epix.net/~landis/primary.html>, <http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/38528>, <http://cdm15330.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/19785>, and <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007661485/>. Have students analyze the images using the Library of Congress's primary source analysis tool ([http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing\\_Primary\\_Sources.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf)).
3. Timeline. Look at the timeline provided by the National Indian Education Association at <http://www.niea.org/nieaflipbook/mobile/index.html#p=40>. Working in pairs or small groups, assign each group a date to explore further. Then, have each group share their findings, working chronologically to summarize the history of the United States' government action involving Indian Education.
4. Learn About Acorn Soup. At school, Benny Len hears a boy crying, "making soft sounds like a boiling pot of acorn soup." Students can learn about California acorn culture at <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/acorn>. Then they can determine what they think the sentence from the story meant and evaluate why the soup was important to Benny Len, particularly its cultural relevance.
5. View a documentary on Native American Boarding Schools. You may want to show a video on the government-run boarding schools, such as <https://www.pbs.org/video/unspoken-americas-native-american-boarding-schools-oobt1r/>. What are students' reactions? What did they learn from watching the documentary? How was it different watching a video?
6. Conduct a research project. Students can choose topics related to this story to research, such as different Native American boarding schools. Using details from *Home to Medicine Mountain*, the students can then jump off to other books and sources to supplement their research by taking notes and composing either a research paper or presentation to share. You may want to start with the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian's Essential Understandings about American Indians (<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pdf/NMAI-Essential-Understandings.pdf>).
7. Still Here! Oyate is a Native organization working to ensure that Native stories are portrayed with honesty and integrity. One of their missions is to ensure that the American public recognizes that Native Americans are still alive and living in the United States. To combat the misperception that Native Americans are part of history, share some of Oyate's "Living Stories" with the class (<http://oyate.org/index.php/resources/45-resources/living-stories>).

### Art

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2, and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Collage of What Makes a Good School. Have students create collages of different things they would find in a "good" school. Once finished, have students share why they put in the images that they did.
2. Listen to Floyd Red Crow Westerman Perform Peter Laforge's "Drums." Both the singer and writer are of Native American descent, and the song relates the experience at government-run



boarding schools. One recording of “Drums” can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM-3et-4iFY&feature=youtu.be>. The lyrics can be found at <https://mightyturk.wordpress.com/2013/04/03/drums-lyrics-and-chords/>. Have students identify similarities of events from *Home to Medicine Mountain* and any new information presented. Also ask students how the different formats (book versus song) allow the audience to get different perspectives on the government-run boarding school experiences. For example, do any emotions come through in the song that they can’t get from the story?

3. **Make Music.** Students can either find a song that relates to the story in some way and share it with the class or compose their own piece. If you have access to clap sticks, have students make rhythms with them (a video that shows how to use clap sticks can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8M2JA6oizk>).
4. **Culture Appreciation.** In *Home to Medicine Mountain*, Benny Len dreams about the bear dance and other cultural elements. To fully appreciate what Benny Len remembers, students can visit the National Museum of the American Indian’s page on Art and History to view art created by the California/Great Basin Native culture. Then, students can write an exit ticket by writing three things they liked, two things they learned, and one question they have about the art (<https://www.si.edu/Museums/american-indian-museum>).

### School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. **Hold a Family Meeting.** One of the themes in *Home to Medicine Mountain* is to find ways to

value home. At a family meeting, students can talk with their families about the things that make their home special.

2. **What Did You Do in School Today?** To answer the typical parent/guardian question, have students prepare an answer for when they return home. Students can tell their families about *Home to Medicine Mountain*, what happened in the story, if they liked it or not, and how it relates to their lives. Students can ask their families if they’d ever heard of the forced boarding schools for Native Americans and tell them what they’d learned.
3. **Were You Ever Homesick?** Students can ask their families to tell them about times when they were homesick and what they did to deal with it. Students can then share their own experiences along with what they learned about Benny Len.
4. **Explore Native American Books at Home.** Using Oyate’s document on evaluating children’s books for anti-Indian bias (<http://oyate.org/index.php/resources/41-resources/how-to-tell-the-difference>), students can look through their books at home or at a local library to try to identify books with stereotypes of Native People and be mindful of these stereotypes in the future.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Chiori Santiago** was an accomplished journalist who wrote for national magazines about the art, music and family life of people from many parts of the world. Always active in community affairs, she was also an arts and music commentator for public television and radio along with an editor for an oral-history anthology of San Francisco and a Japanese heritage magazine.

Chiori was born in Chicago but moved to California by high school. She died in 2007 of complications from cancer. She was 54.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Judith Lowry** is a nationally exhibited painter of Mountain Maidu, Hamawi Pit-River, and Australian descent. Considered one of California's premiere contemporary Native American artists, she is inspired by the stories passed down in her family. Her work deals with memory and survival. For more information on Lowry's craft, visit <https://wheelwright.org/exhibitions/illumination-paintings-by-judith-lowry/>.

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

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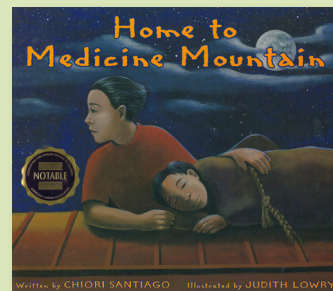
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\*Reading Level: Grade 3–4

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grade 1 and up

Guided Reading Level: R

Accelerated Reader® Level/

Points: 3.9/5

**Themes:** United States History, Siblings, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Responsibility, Overcoming Obstacles, Native American Interest, Home, Heroism, Grandparents, Friendship, Families, Environment/Nature, Dreams & Aspirations, Discrimination, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Persistence/Grit, Self Control/Self Regulation, California, Collaboration, Conflict resolution, Courage, Education, History, People In Motion, Pride, Protest, Moving to a New Area, Adventure, Escape, Love

## RESOURCES ON THE WEB

<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/home-to-medicine-mountain>

*All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.*