



Students from Irene Sutter's class deliberate before making their guess as to which jar holds exactly 100 items. The kindergartners

Facing the camera are Dominique Hagerman and Lindsay Williams.

A lot of ways to reach 100

The banner in the hall read "It's the 100th day of school today, Horray, Horray."

Children who weighed exactly 100 pounds got their name printed on a prominently displayed poster.

Students found out how far 100 steps would take them from their classroom door.

Special recess for the day was 100 minutes.

Students stood in line to make their guess as to which jar, filled with marshmallows, toothpicks, cotton balls and such, contained exactly 100 pieces.

The creative writing assignment for the day was "If I had \$100 to spend."

Some students drew portraits of what they thought they might look like at age 100.

Many of the younger students were also reading "100th Day" that was a big part of the grand finale parade in the grounds of St. Paul Lutheran School in Farmington Hills Feb. 5. After that, everyone

got a slice of the specially designed 100-day cake.

The school has been celebrating its 100th day each year since it adopted the Math-Their-Way hands-on method of introducing and teaching mathematics in the lower grades.

All activities are programmed by the school's kindergarten and first grade teachers, Irene Sutter and Ruth Nevers, but the entire student body joins in the fun.

All of the students get involved because they all started out with Math-Their-Way, Sutter said. "They remember all the concepts and it brings back some nice memories for them when they were in kindergarten and first grade here."

All of the work leading up to the 100th day, as well as the day itself, is a break for us in the winter. The festivities of the holidays are gone and we've got another festive day to look forward to on what otherwise might be a dark and grim February day.



Matthew Olson is a first grade student who made a 100 day hat to wear on the 100th day of school.

Katrina Barret learns just how far she can go in 100 steps from her classroom door. She's with Carolyn Meyer a volunteer who works two days a week as a teacher's aide.



Therapeutic horseback class offered

Tollgate 4-H Exceptional Equestrians, a therapeutic horseback riding program in Novi for people with disabilities, is accepting applications for spring classes.

Anyone age 5 or over with any type of disability may apply. Riders will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

For applications or further information, write the Rider Coordinator at Tollgate 4-H Center, 28115 Meadowbrook, Novi 48377-1320, or call 347-3860.

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Make your complaints count

If you're not happy with a product or service, do you complain?

Most consumers don't, and that's a mistake, according to the Michigan Credit Union League (MCUL), the principal association representing Michigan's 3.6 million credit union members.

"Consumer complaints do pay off," says MCUL president Kenyan E. Bixby, "all it takes is perseverance and little know-how." Some companies offer toll-free telephone numbers for customer assistance. Using a firm's customer assistance service can be a quick, easy and effective way to resolve minor problems, Bixby says.

When dealing with less sophisticated companies or a more complex problem, however, you may need other methods to get action. Here are the steps to take:

Go back to the place of purchase. "Calmly and politely identify the problem and how you'd like it handled," Bixby suggests. "If the person you speak to doesn't have the power to help, ask for the supervisor or manager. A friendly and positive approach is the key."

Bring along any evidence that might be helpful in presenting your

complaint, such as the product itself or a photo. Also have your sales receipt, canceled credit union share draft or check, repair or service order, warranty and other pertinent documents.

The majority of complaints are settled at the store level, the Michigan Credit Union League reports. If the merchant doesn't address the problem, go to the next step.

CONTACT THE company directly. Move up the ladder, Bixby advises. Get in touch with the national headquarters of the retail outlet or the manufacturer of the product.

Write the company president. Describe the problem you're having with the product and what steps you've taken thus far to have it remedied. Explain what solution you're seeking, whether repair, replacement or refund. Include all pertinent information and photocopies of documents. Ask for a response within two or three weeks.

If you don't receive a response within the requested time, send another copy of your letter with a short cover note. Explain that if your complaint doesn't receive prompt attention,

you'll pursue the matter with a third party.

As an alternative, you may want to telephone the company directly. Ask the company's switchboard operator for the name of a person who can help you, and the name of that person's boss. Keep moving up the chain of command until you get somebody who's willing to act.

If these steps fail, enlist the aid of third parties. Start with the trade association of the industry to which the firm belongs. If the association can't help, you turn to your local Better Business Bureau or your state's consumer protection agency.

AS A LAST RESORT, consider small claims court. If your loss is greater than the limit for small claims court, you may want to hire an attorney. Of course, you should weigh the cost of court action against the benefits.

Most companies want satisfied customers, the MCUL says, and chances are your complaint will get a response. Companies know that a customer whose complaint is handled effectively often becomes a more loyal customer.

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