Once upon a time near a stream by a schoolyard, there was a tiny salamander named Mandy.
Mandy enjoyed watching the children play kickball in the grass.
One day, a boy kicked a ball over to Mandy’s rock.
He ran over to pick up the ball, and as he was jogging away, Mandy said, “Good kick.”
The startled boy turned around and asked, “Um... Did you just say something?”

“Yes,” she giggled. “My name is Mandy, and I’m a Tiger Salamander.”
“Hi Mandy, I’m Zack!” he said.
“I thought salamanders only lived in the swamp.”
“We Tiger Salamanders live in lots of places – like right here in Louisville. We live in the streams as babies, then move to the banks.”
“This is my home stream, where I was born.”

“Whoa!” Zack said. “Do you like living in a stream?”
“When my stream is nice and clean like this, there’s no better place in the world for a salamander like me,” said Mandy.

“Who’s in charge of keeping your stream clean?” asked Zack.

“It takes everyone to help keep streams clean! All the ways we live, play and work affects our waterways,” said Mandy.
“Really? What does me playing have to do with your stream?”
“Well, think about your ball. Had you not come looking for it, it would’ve eventually washed downstream. Anything left behind pollutes our waterways.
Even tiny particles you can’t see can make a big impact. Those tiny pollution particles are found in things like lawn chemicals, road salt – and even dog poo!"

“Dog poo. Eww! That goes into your stream?” asked Zack.

“Think of it this way – every time you pick up after your dog, you are helping make my stream a little safer and cleaner.”
“But my home is nowhere near this stream,” Zack said.
“Have you seen storm drains along the road in front of your house? Those drains connect to underground pipes that flow into my stream,” replied Mandy.

“Wow! What about the drains that are inside my house?”
“Those drains go to Louisville MSD – they have a water quality treatment center upstream. It cleans the water you drain in your sink or flush down your toilet, then returns it to waterways like my stream.”
“You mean what I flush down the toilet could end up in your stream?” Zack asked.
“Not before it’s treated. Wastewater from homes and schools goes in dirty and comes out sparkling clean.

“Want to help keep my stream clean?”
“Make sure you only flush the three Ps:

Never flush things like paper towels or wet wipes – and keep small toys away from drains. They can cause big problems.”
“You got it, Mandy,” Zack replied.

“Thank you so much,” Mandy exclaimed.

“And please tell your friends about the three Ps.”
“I will, Mandy,” he said. Then he ran off to play with his friends on that sunny summer day.
For more information on Eastern Tiger Salamanders go to LouisvilleMSD.org/education