Storm Drain Stenciling

Both youth and adults around the world recently participated in Global Youth Services Day (GYSD), a day designed for young people to volunteer in their communities. This year the focus of GYSD was the environment. Working with Partners for Clean Streams and with funding from the TMACOG Stormwater Coalition, communities in Lucas and Wood counties chose to do storm drain stenciling.

What is storm drain stenciling?

Storm drain stenciling projects use plastic stencils, like the one shown below, to paint messages on or near storm drains, reminding people not to dump anything in the drain. Storm drains lead directly to streams and stormwater is not treated. So anything dumped in storm drains gets carried along with rain water including pollution and trash! Dumping anything in the storm drain besides stormwater is known as an illicit discharge. Many jurisdictions in our area are required to have ordinances against illicit discharges and to educate the public about stormwater issues.

What can I do in my neighborhood?

The best practices that you can do to prevent stormwater pollution are to not dump anything down the storm drain and to reduce the amount of runoff going to sewers. You can also help by hosting a storm drain stenciling event if your jurisdiction allows it. During the event, groups of 6-10 children and adult chaperones stencil storm drains down a neighborhood street and hang flyers on residents’ doors informing them of storm drain stenciling. Storm drain stenciling programs can provide youth groups with the opportunity to help their community.

There are efforts to make the storm drain stenciling program an annual event (the next Global Youth Service Days are April 15-17 in 2011). If you are interested in organizing a storm drain stenciling program, please contact Kristina Patterson, Executive Director for Partners for Clean Streams at (419) 874-0727.