



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TENNESSEE REHABILITATION CENTER GRADUATES STRIVE FOR SUCCESS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

DOZENS OF TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES GRADUATE TO A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

SMYRNA, Tenn. – Nearly 90 significantly disabled young men and women from across the state accepted their graduation certificates from the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Smyrna today. Many proudly walked, while others rolled their wheelchairs up the ramp to the stage where they received the hard-earned certificates.

The new graduates took advantage of the ten diverse programs offered at TRC, including Business Education Training, Hospitality and Food Service Training, and Custodial and Warehouse Training. Students are referred to TRC by vocational rehabilitation counselors in their home counties.

“TRC’s mission is to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services in a positive and productive learning environment,” said Assistant Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services Andrea Cooper. “The services offered at TRC assist individuals in achieving their highest level of functioning so they can live and work as independently as possible.”

Students who attend TRC have a wide variety of disabilities, from traumatic brain injuries to blindness or mental retardation. Many must undergo physical or occupational therapy or take part in the transitional living skills program to better assist them as they leave the TRC and move back home or re-locate to new communities and enter the work world.

Cekita Swift, who has a speech and language disability, completed the Business Education vocational training program. The Tiptonville native has moved to Nashville to begin work with the state’s Department of Finance and Administration.

Kimberly Johnson came to TRC from Mt. Carmel to increase her independent living skills. After receiving instruction in home and financial management and other activities of daily living, Johnson, who has cerebral palsy, successfully completed her programs. Johnson was recently hired by A T & T in Johnson City as a customer services rep.

The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center is a state-operated comprehensive rehabilitation facility. It is one of only nine such centers in the nation. Services are provided on campus, and the majority of clients live on site while receiving services. The length of programs offered at TRC varies, depending upon the individual client’s interest, abilities and needs. TRC serves more than 1,300 Tennesseans with disabilities each year. Since opening its doors in 1977, TRC has served more than 28,000 individuals.

For more information about TRC, the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Tennessee Department of Human Services, visit <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/rehabilitation.htm>

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