



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 31, 2007

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## **TENNESSEE REHABILITATION CENTER GRADUATES OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS**

*MORE THAN 80 TENNESSEANS WITH DISABILITIES GAIN SKILLS TO ENTER THE WORKFORCE*

SMYRNA , Tenn.— Dozens of young men and women with significant disabilities donned cap and gown and walked or rolled their wheelchairs across the stage at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center in Smyrna today. All of the students are determined to better their lives and enter or re-enter the workforce.

The new graduates took advantage of the diverse programs offered at TRC, including Building Maintenance, Business Education Training, Food Service, Custodial Training and Warehouse Training.

Today's graduation ceremony was marked with inspiring words from guest speaker Amy Hawkins, the Sumner County mother who was badly injured during a tornado that swept through middle Tennessee in April 2006. Hawkins' ribs and back were broken when she used her body as a shield to protect her two small children from the devastating storm.

"If you mix a little patience with determination," Hawkins told the graduating students from her wheelchair, "you will succeed in your endeavors."

TRC's mission is to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services in a positive and productive learning environment. The services offered at TRC assist individuals in achieving their highest level of functioning so they can live and work as independently as possible.

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 is part of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

TRC serves more than 1,300 disabled Tennesseans each year. Since opening its doors in 1977, TRC has served more than 28,000 disabled individuals.

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

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