



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

*NEARLY 100 TENNESSEEANS GRADUATE TO A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE*

SMYRNA, Tenn.— Dozens of young men and women with significant disabilities donned cap and gown on Friday, August 26 and proudly walked across the stage at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Smyrna. Each student is filled with the same determination and drive to enter or re-enter the workforce and better their lives. Their studies and hard work in programs like Building Maintenance, Business Education Training, Food Service, Custodial Training and Warehouse Training have enabled them to do just that. With certificate in hand, these new graduates are now moving on to the next stage in their lives.

“The Department of Human Services is dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities become successfully employed in communities across Tennessee and beyond,” said newly appointed Assistant Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services Andrea Cooper. “The services offered at TRC truly do assist individuals in achieving their highest level of functioning so they can live and work as independently as possible.”

Two of the new graduates are already out in the workforce, testing the skills that they learned at TRC. Lee Robertson recently completed the Food Service Vocational Training Program and is successfully employed as a cook in a restaurant in Columbia. He took the short drive from Maury County to Rutherford County to take part in Friday’s ceremony.

One of the missing faces at graduation was Chad Sanders, a Trenton native who completed his training in May. Chad was not able to attend the ceremony because he was on the job as a forklift operator at the Pictsweet vegetable packing company in Bell, Tennessee. Like many students at TRC, Chad received additional services while at the facility, including Vocational Evaluation Services and pre-vocational services from the JOBS program. Chad also completed a program of services in the Traumatic Brain Injury Program.

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 vary, depending upon the individual client’s interest, abilities and needs. TRC is part of the Division of Rehabilitation Services within the Tennessee Department of Human Services. TRC serves more than 1,000 Tennesseans with disabilities each year. Since opening its doors in 1977, TRC has served more than 25,000 individuals. For more information about the Division of Rehabilitation Services, please visit:

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/rehabilitation.htm>

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