

**For Immediate Release**

**Media Contacts:**

**Martha Lawson, for Friends of Warriors' Path  
State Park: 423-292-4010**

**Tisha Calabrese-Benton, TN Department of  
Environment & Conservation: 865-594-5442**

## **Lions Narnia™ Braille Trail Opens as Phase II of Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground at Warriors' Path State Park**

KINGSPORT, TN, April 14, 2009--The next time you visit Warriors' Path State Park, listen closely and you may hear a familiar children's story carried by gentle breezes from a beautiful quarter-mile nature trail. But this isn't just any story, nor is it just any trail. This is the Lions Narnia™ Trail, which has just opened as the second phase of one of the most unique play and learning facilities in the country, Darrell's Dream Boundless™ Playground.

The Lions Narnia Trail is a Braille trail surrounding the existing playground that features eight sensory stations telling a story based on [The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe](#) fantasy by C.S. Lewis. Each station along the wheelchair-accessible trail features an exhibit, large-print sign with Braille and audio theatrical recording to tell the story of Aslan, the lion.

"Since Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground first opened two years ago, this unique play area has attracted thousands of visitors to Warriors' Path State Park," said Jim Fyke, Commissioner of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. "It's very rewarding to know that this beautiful new trail helps make our state park more open to our blind and visually impaired citizens. This Boundless Playground is a tribute to public-private partnerships, and I congratulate the many people in the Tri-Cities area who worked so hard to create a place where children of all abilities can play together."

Betty DeVinney, who has chaired the Darrell's Dream playground project on behalf of the Friends of Warriors' Path State Park, said she's grateful to the many companies, civic organizations and individuals who have made both the original playground and this new phase a reality. "One of the great things about our community is the way many people get behind an idea and stick with it. Darrell's Dream is a great example of that. The number of monetary contributors and volunteers who have provided gifts-in-kind, plus their own time and effort, is remarkable. Those of us who knew Darrell Rice—for whom

the playground is named—realize how honored he would be to be remembered in a way that truly enhances our community.”

DeVinney specifically mentioned two groups of people who played key roles in the development of The Lions Narnia Trail—The Lions Club of Kingsport and The Moore Group, Architects/Planners.

Mary Steadman, project vice chair, said working with the non-profit Lions Club of Kingsport service organization to sponsor the Braille trail was a great connection since Lions worldwide emphasize services to the blind and visually impaired. “Our local Lions Club does such great work that it was a natural partnership for this project. And continuing the lion theme to incorporate the C.S. Lewis story seemed like a great idea on the part of the Lions Club of Kingsport to tie it all together,” Steadman said. “Once they outlined the story segments and received permission to use the C.S. Lewis theme, we worked closely to refine the exhibits and determine the best way to tell that story in this setting,” she continued. “We turned to people in The Moore Group, Architects/Planners, who have done an absolutely outstanding job of bringing to life the concepts for each individual station. The Moore Group, as well as several Lions Club members and so many others, have spent countless hours making this trail what it is--more than any of us every dreamed,” Steadman said.

Doug Haseltine is president of the Lions Club of Kingsport. “Our local club is so proud to have spearheaded this effort, made possible with grant assistance from Lions Club International Foundation and other East Tennessee clubs,” he said. “This project is specifically designed with the blind and visually impaired in mind. We want them to have the opportunity to experience the trail and everything in it alongside their friends.

“There is also a significant educational opportunity for sighted children to enjoy the trail in a different way,” Haseltine said. “Children with full vision can put on blindfolds while following the trail. Although they may have difficulty at first, they will begin to realize how their other senses, like touch and hearing, are heightened when sight is limited. No one’s *imagination* is ever limited by the sense of sight,” he said.

Tony Moore of The Moore Group called the development of the project design both interesting and challenging. “Our challenge was the design the stations in a way that would be appealing to both visually impaired and sighted people,” he said. “This has been a great experience for our company, and I hope the community enjoys it as much as we have.”

In addition to the Lions Club, other major sponsors of stations along the Braille Trail are J.A. Street Associates, Sullivan South Area Community Chest, Greater Indian Springs Community Chest, Quenton and Joy McBride Tubb, Michael and Kathy Richards, and the Dave Young Memorial.

DeVinney said there's more to come for Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground. "We continue to be excited about our future plans for Darrell's Dream. With the financial assistance of Sam and DeLois Anderson, a fully accessible tree house on this site will open this fall, fulfilling yet another dream for the children of the Tri-Cities," she said.

### **About Friends of Warriors' Path State Park**

The Friends of Warriors' Path is an organization that fosters conservation and educational efforts and assists the park staff in its efforts to better preserve and protect its existing facilities and resources. The group also supports the park staff in their work to provide quality recreational and interpretive experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, many natural, cultural and scenic features.

Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground opened at the park in April 2007 and is associated with the National Center for Boundless Playgrounds, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping communities create extraordinary playgrounds for children with and without disabilities.

####