



## Vienna Schools Get Fresh Vegetables from Bootcamp

**By Evie Allen and Benjy Jeffords**

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VIENNA -- The Vienna High School cafeteria is now getting fresh produce from an unlikely source. This is the first year the school will be able to cook and serve fresh vegetables thanks to inmates at Dixon Springs Bootcamp.

The department of corrections says inmate work programs are a good way to help with rehabilitation, discipline and serving others.

"It helps the community. It helps us. It shows us hard work and dedication and it's just great," says inmate Irvin.

The women of the Dixon Springs boot camp have been working on a three acre fruit and vegetable garden. And starting this year, Vienna High school has been seeing the fruits of their labor.

"We can't do the labor part and financially it helps too," says Betty Saltzman, Food Service Director for the high school.

Prior to this year, the high school had been using canned vegetables and instant potatoes for meals. With fresh vegetables, Saltzman can serve healthier dishes. "I feel like they don't get enough of it at home. It's easier for us to give it to them because we feed them more than one meal a day."

"They're trying to benefit the community and the students see that because they see the fresh produce. You know, it gives us something kind of to be thankful for too," says junior Megan McCuan.

As part of the 120 day program the women prepare the soil, plant the seeds and pick the vegetables.

"We have milk crates picked daily full of green beans, cucumbers and tomatoes. The sweet corn has been phenomenal this year," says Jason Henton, Dixon Springs IIP Superintendent.

The garden has served other organizations for more than 10 years. "With that garden program being enlarged this year, we've had to have more positive outlets or more places for our produce to be delivered."

The inmates work seven days a week and up to eight hours a day on the garden. The boot camp replaces a one to eight year non-violent sentence and hopefully gives the women something more.

"They've done something for the good of the community and should have a sense of satisfaction from that," say Vienna bus driver Max Hook.

So far Vienna High School has received fresh produce once a week. And the center plans to expand the garden next year to five acres to serve more communities and schools.