Five students in Mountain Home, Arkansas saw a problem that needed fixing, but they couldn't do it on their own. My role is to be a mentor to them and make sure their project pieces are complete.

Mountain Home's problem: The local hiking trail, David's Trail, has severely decreased in popularity. It is the only close developed hiking trail for Mountain Home residents.

The solution: Renovate the trail and add artwork to make the trail a community gem and a place for people to enjoy nature and exercise outdoors.

SISTA seeks to assist high school students as they create programs or projects that sustain or revitalize their community.

For high school students, EAST is a student driven, project based class focused on professional development, technology use, and community problem solving.

SISTA sends emails to local schools with or without EAST programs. Students with projects or ideas for projects are encouraged to apply. From there, projects are chosen and a University of Arkansas student is partnered with the high school student, or students, spearheading the project.

For this project my role was to be the mentor to five students attending Mountain Home High School. Through SISTA, the students have learned the importance of proper planning and how that creates quality work. SISTA sent out the portions of this project they wanted the EAST kids to complete which included, an initial proposal, oral history, personnel, duties, timeline & schedule, financials, evaluation plan, and an executive summary, along with revisions. After each section was completed, the students sent me their final copy where I would make corrections and give advice on how certain parts could be made better.

“The definition of sustainability given to the high school students interested in partnering with SISTA is very broad and it is up to the student to interpret that and tailor their project in that way. SISTA starts with the high school students and a proposed project that revitalizes their home community and then partners them with University of Arkansas students also interested in sustainability. The high school students are told to develop and move forward with project planning with the resources they have.

Social systems:
- The trail project will be beneficial to the community of Mountain Home. Not only will the trail bring a community together, but also will give people a place to exercise outdoors and anyone who uses the trail will, hopefully, gain a better appreciation of the arts.
- SISTA brings together individuals to work as a group to accomplish the goal of enriching the communities in which they live in for years to come.

The SISTA program is very beneficial to not only high school students to learn real world project planning, but also to local communities who benefit from the projects that get developed and funded.