

## **RCE Youth Breaking Their Silence: Surviving in a Covid-19 World, APRIL 21 | 2:35-4 pm**

Presented by RCE Greater Atlanta and Georgetown RISE

### ***PANEL DESCRIPTIONS***

This year, RCE Greater Atlanta and Georgetown RISE will be co-hosting the third annual youth virtual conference. This event, previously organized with a stand-alone conference format, has been adapted to focus on the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on youth, specifically mental health, finances, and sustainable development. Through interactive panel and roundtable discussion, participants will leave with an interest to continue the conversation in their communities and networks, and hopefully get involved in our RCE networks.

The event will begin with a 15-minute introduction, followed by 60-minute panel discussions on one of three topics: mental health, finances, and sustainable development; participants will be able to indicate their panel preference during the event. See panel descriptions below. We will close the event with a concluding discussion and overview of how to stay involved.

**Mental Health:** Over one year ago, the world came to a halt as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; all of our lives were forever changed. On the news, we hear of healthcare workers striving to help everyone during this crisis, the many non-essential workers who have lost their jobs, and how schools have shut down to minimize the spread; moreover, how have students' lives changed? Higher education is often a checkpoint before true adulthood as college students must juggle numerous responsibilities including completing work before deadlines, comprehending the learned information, earning satisfactory grades, obtaining internships or research opportunities, networking, finding the finances to pay for school, remaining in school, graduating, and eventually finding a career. The stress inflicted upon students is merely endless, and with the pandemic providing additional stressors, the mental health of college students today must be addressed. Join us to learn from university students about how the pandemic has altered their lives, and how we can all better support youth mental health moving forward.

**Finances Panel:** The Covid-19 pandemic has ensued for over one year, and altered our lives forever. With increasing average student debt and a historic financial crisis, students have been dramatically impacted. In addition to academics, extracurricular work, personal obligations, and other stressors, every college student must find a way to pay for university as tuition rates continue to increase. Whereas many adults in the United States were offered economic relief from the first Covid-19 stimulus checks, many high school and young college students were left out of the initial financial support. Moreover, we must consider students in countries where little to no government support has been provided and countries whose medical supplies are limited or severely diminished. Whether by the loss of paid summer/fall internships, lack of employment opportunities, temporary university closure, personal financial struggles, and/or other added financial stressors, student financial concerns must be addressed. Join us to learn from university students about how the pandemic has altered their lives, and how we can all better support youth student finances moving forward.

**Sustainable Development Panel:** About one year ago, the Covid-19 pandemic began to rapidly spread throughout the world, impacting the daily lives and operations of families across the globe for the foreseeable future. Through periods of adversity in history, the driving forces towards the dawn of a new age began with those brave enough to take action and implement what the United Nations refers to as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These goals work towards building a better world for all of us, including by restoring lost community infrastructures, monitoring losses and providing families with access to food and water, rebuilding the economy step by step to eliminate poverty gaps in communities, and making sure everyone has access to safe testing and health care facilities. As the next generation of leadership, it is our mission to take action. Our panel seeks to find young adults willing to communicate what they have done to help their communities in regards to sustainable development in the United States and abroad. Join us to discuss and listen to personal sustainability experiences, projects, and to learn how we can better support youth sustainable action moving forward.