Presidential nominee joins the team
Rand Paul is running for President. However, politics is not his first love. “This is what I love doing,” he said as he entered a small operating room in Cap-Haïtien, Haiti, ready to begin a day of cataract surgeries. Senator Paul joined the Global Outreach team to restore the sight of hundreds of Haitians during a week of surgeries from August 15-22, 2015. While the Senator was only with the group for part of the mission, his presence had a great impact.

“Having Senator Paul participate in our mission brings awareness to the tremendous need in Haiti,” said Dr. Craig Chaya, an ophthalmologist with Moran. “It helps to further our mission to eradicate curable blindness in this part of the world.” This is Senator Paul’s second time working with the outreach team, having joined them in Guatemala in 2014. The partnership was formed in part by the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), which recognized Moran’s position of excellence in global vision care and Senator Paul’s desire to help those in need. “I enjoy working with some of the best surgeons in the world,” Paul said. “They are able to handle anything out in the field—even the most difficult cases.”
Eye Care in Cap-Haïtien

The region surrounding Cap-Haïtien is home to almost one million citizens with very limited access to medical professionals. This makes it extremely difficult for residents to even get basic vision care. That fact, plus the expense of cataract surgery in a country where the average wage is just over $2 a day, means that many of the patients would have faced a lifetime of blindness if not for the Moran team. To complete almost 200 surgeries, the team put in long days moving patients in and out of the operating room in a perfectly timed surgical ballet.

During this Haiti Outreach Medical Eye Camp, Moran partnered with VPC, where all the surgeries were performed. VPC was chosen based on its model of care that uses the fees from patients who can pay in a private clinic to fund the treatment of low-income patients in their social clinic. "They've really been able to operate a sustainable model of eye care," said Chaya. "They're able to meet the needs of people at all economic levels and serve as an example to others."

Changing Lives

Pierre Jermone - “This is the day,” Pierre said as the bandages were removed from his eye. For more than a year, he had dreamed of the day he would see again, walk unassisted again, and go back to working again as a gardener. He has missed his independence and his time alone among the trees and plants. His sister and niece have cared for him since he was blinded by cataracts more than a year ago. His niece, Mary, says that since he lost his eyesight, Pierre sits in a corner of the house, talking to himself all day. Pierre was one of 12 people brought to the clinic for surgery by Association of the Blind in Grison Garde, a town 40 miles outside of Cap-Haïtien.

Rosemary - Rosemary says if it were not for the Moran Eye Center, she would still be blind. After losing her sight to cataracts, she went to several doctors looking for help—and only found treatments she could not afford. She was already living hand to mouth, working as a cook in order to provide for herself and her five children. Once she went blind, that money dried up because she could no longer see the food. Now, she says she is ready to get back into the kitchen.

Being able to see again will not only change 85-year-old Marguerite’s life, but the lives of her grandchildren as well. Several of them had to quit school to run her small store when she could no longer run it due to her blindness. Now, she says they can return to classes. Marguerite takes care of 12 grandchildren in all, and says she can’t wait to get back to her store. She has worked there since 1978 when she was widowed and had to find a way to support her family. Not being able to work due to her vision loss has been devastating for her; she says she does not like to rely on others.
Israel - A stray bottle cap stole Israel’s sight. It caused an injury that led to a cataract that made it impossible for him to continue his work as a mechanic. Although it’s only been a few months, it has been hard on his family. He and his wife have six children, and he is the sole breadwinner. Now, he says, God has granted his prayers by sending the Moran team to Cap-Haïtien to restore his sight by removing his cataract.

Training Locals
Since early 2013, Dr. Craig Chaya has been leading teams from the Moran to perform outreach work and provide medical training at VPC. During a previous trip, VPC’s Dr. Luc-Dupuy learned how to perform corneal transplants under the direction of Dr. Michael Feilmeier, a former Moran fellow. Together, they performed the first corneal transplants in the northern region of Haiti. On a mission in early 2015, Dr. Chaya and his team visited VPC to continue Dr. Luc-Dupuy’s corneal training, as well as to provide an array of glaucoma education. During this August 2015 mission, Moran physicians and medical technicians worked with VPC’s entire staff, including Drs. Lucien, Luc-Dupuy, and Roney, to further improve their ophthalmic operating skills.

Future Plans
The Moran global outreach team will return to VPC in Cap-Haïtien on a yearly basis for many years to come. The focus of future trips includes eradicating curable blindness, transferring surgical skills from Moran physicians to VPC medical staff, recruiting more physicians to assist with care and training at VPC, and creating an ophthalmology residency and fellowship program for Haitian medical students. Additionally, the Moran team will work to secure corneal tissue for VPC so that Dr. Luc-Dupuy and his colleagues can continue to provide corneal care for the country.

Thanks to the Moran team, Israel can now return to work and provide for his family.