



**BUCKEYE**  
**OPHTHALMOLOGY**

# Share Your Outreach Experiences With Us

## We want to hear from you

The Ohio State University Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences is proud of its faculty and alumni who have volunteered their time and efforts. The World Health Organization estimates that for every blind or visually impaired person, as many as three of their family members must stop work or school to care for them. Our Ohio State residents, fellows and alumni are sharing their talents in foreign environments and educating global medical professionals on the newest procedures for treating eye patients.

We are expanding our vision and hope you will join us to support the Global Outreach Project—a sustainable outreach and education program to restore sight and change lives in the developing world.

Coordination of these goals involves logistical challenges such as organizing travel, government relations, intake, organization and distribution of supplies with corporate partners. It also entails alumni support, and coordination with residents, fellows and alumni to secure travel plans and participation. Are you a global visionary who has helped bring eye care to those who need it most at home and abroad? We want to hear your story.



## Buckeyes Volunteer Beyond Our Borders

### Peru | November 2019

Alumni John Pajka, MD (90') and Dave George, MD (92') visited the isolated city of Abancay, Peru. They were joined by current resident Jack Li, MD on this outreach endeavor. "My Ohio State resident mates are lifelong friends and have been interested in helping with this goal through the years" explained Dr. Pajka. "Part of my mission is to provide opportunities for young resident doctors to see firsthand the global need for access to eye care."

Dr. George recalls the experience as "very worthwhile being able to help so many truly blind people. The people of Abancay were so appreciative and the local hospital staff was fabulous. I feel fortunate to be able to take part in these mission trips. I am thankful for the work Dr. Pajka does to organize these trips and that he continues to invite my team".

"The stories from these patients are emotional and truly inspiring" Dr. Pajka says. "Many have been blind for years, never having seen their grandchildren, or family who have been feeding them and caring for them. Taking their patches off and watching them see their faces for the first time is indescribable. Experiencing how much of the world has no access to eye care, and seeing the magnitude and severity of blindness, is to appreciate what a great opportunity we have as ophthalmologists to make a real difference."

Dr. Pajka believes exposing young eye surgeons to this need during their training, may spark a passion that stays with them for their entire career. That is exactly what happened for Dr. Jack Li. Global service drew him to ophthalmology. Dr. Li explains "Going to Peru has been a career changing experience. There is a large surgical log in the world and I look forward to a career improving vision worldwide."



Uzbekistan



India

Ghana

Ethiopia

Uganda

Kenya



Contact [eye@osumc.edu](mailto:eye@osumc.edu) or 614-293-8760 with global destinations and photos to add to our map.

## Ghana | February 2020

Amit Tandon, MD and John Pajka, MD (90') visited the Korle Bu Training Hospital in Accra, Ghana in February 2020. Supported by the Himalayan Cataract Project, they spent a week training senior surgical staff and residents. This was Dr. Tandon's 7th mission trip but his first visit to Ghana. "Our goal was to help create sustainable medical care in Ghana by teaching the local ophthalmologists how to do phacoemulsification" says Dr. Tandon.

For Dr. Pajka, global ophthalmology has been a career long passion and part of who he is. "We as ophthalmologists all have experienced the tremendous impact that cataract surgery can have on a blind person's life. In the developing world, they say "A blind person is a mouth with no hands". It affects not only that blind person who can no longer work to support themselves or their family, but those who must take care of them."

Restoring sight with cataract surgery is not just life changing, but in many cases life saving. "Here in the United States, we take our access to great eye care for granted. In the developing world, we are trying to provide access to excellent eye care," shares Dr. Pajka. His aim is to work with local doctors and nurses to provide training and support in obtaining equipment, supplies, and education. "The ultimate objective is to form partnerships to form sustainable eye care delivery systems that will continue after we are no longer there".

