By Fred Michmershuizen, today Staff

Oral Health America held its 28th Annual Gala & Benefit on Wednesday evening at the Marriott Marquis, bringing together the dental industry’s movers and shakers to raise money for a good cause.

With programs such as Smiles Across America and the Wisdom Tooth Project, OHA reaches millions of Americans each year with much-needed information and help. It is the support of generous individuals and corporate sponsors that allows OHA to achieve its goals.

“Oral Health America remains steadfast in its mission to connect communities with resources to increase access to care, improve health literacy and advocate for policies that benefit all Americans, particularly those most vulnerable,” said Beth Truett, president and CEO of OHA, and Dr. George W. Tysowsky, chair of the OHA Board of Directors, in a thank you message to gala attendees printed in the evening’s program.

“Our dedication to improving oral health and its impact upon systematic health has never wavered,” the OHA leaders said.

The evening began with a cocktail reception and silent auction. Later, some of the OHA’s top contributors were recognized, including Million Dollar Donor Award recipient Dentacq. Marshall University/West Virginia Oral Health Coalition was honored with the Smiles Across America Champion Award, and DuPage County Health Department received the Wisdom Tooth Project Champion Award.

The evening’s top honor was presented to Tribute Honoree Dr. Jack Dillenberg, dean emeritus of the Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health and president of Dillenberg & Friends, which provides a full scope of health services consulting. Dillenberg offered a rousing, inspirational message to gala attendees, who honored him with a standing ovation.

Caitlin Simone, accompanied by the Ken Arlen Evolution Orchestra, was mistress of ceremonies and offered a solo performance. Dinner and dancing followed the presentations and awards.