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MARKET REVIEW

Global equities remained steady for most of the month but sold off in the final days, as investors awaited key US elections, navigated heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, and assessed ongoing policy easing measures. Favorable US economic data, including subdued inflation, drove expectations that the US Federal Reserve (Fed) may slow its pace of rate cuts. This sentiment was further emphasized by the notable rise in 10-year Treasury yields, which reached 4.28% in October, up from a 15-month low of 3.62% in late September, underscoring the market's expectations for the pace of Fed rate cuts, positive economic indicators, and improved prospects for a soft landing. In Europe, third-quarter GDP exceeded expectations, and the European Central Bank lowered interest rates by 25 basis points, to 3.25%, amid waning inflation and a weak economic outlook. Emerging markets faced pressure from a stronger US dollar, while the conflict in the Middle East reached its one-year mark, with military strikes escalating between Israel and Iran.

FUND PERFORMANCE AND ATTRIBUTION

- The fund delivered negative returns for the month.
- Real estate and industrials were the bottom contributing sectors, while health care was the top contributing sector.
- At the issuer level, our top two absolute contributors were Dayforce and Stride, while our top two absolute detractors were New Oriental Education and Manpowergroup.
- Shares of Dayforce rose after the company reported solid third quarter results, driven by better-than-expected revenue. The company also reaffirmed full year revenue guidance. New Oriental Education & Technology shares tumbled during the period alongside other Chinese stocks on concerns that Beijing's stimulus boost would not sufficiently revive the economy. The company also reported Q1 FY 2025 earnings and provided conservative revenue guidance for fiscal year 2025. Weak consumption has negatively impacted test preparation and tutoring services and is expected to decelerate further in Q2 FY 2025.

FUND POSITIONING AND OUTLOOK

Global equities fell over October due to uncertainty surrounding the upcoming US elections and potential policy shifts. In the near term, we expect market volatility to remain elevated with inflation and political uncertainty contributing to sources of market concern but offset by growing confidence in global economic expansion.

We believe education continues to be an absolute precondition for long-term economic development and will remain one of the largest components to most governments' expenditures as government policy support continues to grow. The disruption to traditional education via more remote forms of learning, incorporating technology and advances in AI are also leading to our conviction in this structural theme and the opportunities it presents for the education segment in coming years.

We see interesting opportunities for active management within the sector over a full market cycle with companies benefiting from more resilient education expenditure during periods of economic weakness to companies capturing increased spending on training, development, hiring and innovation in a more robust economic environment.

At the end of the period, our largest exposures were consumer discretionary and industrials and we were least exposed to communication services and health care. We had no exposure to consumer staples, energy, and materials, among others. From a regional perspective, our largest exposures were North America and Japan and we were least exposed to United Kingdom.

RISKS

CAPITAL: Investment markets are subject to economic, regulatory, market sentiment and political risks. All investors should consider the risks that may impact their capital, before investing. The value of your investment may become worth more or less than at the time of the original investment. The Fund may experience a high volatility from time to time. **CONCENTRATION:** Concentration of investments within securities, sectors or industries, or geographical regions may impact performance. **CURRENCY:** The value of the Fund may be affected by changes in currency exchange rates. Unhedged currency risk may subject the Fund to significant volatility. **EMERGING MARKETS:** Emerging markets may be subject to custodial and political risks, and volatility. Investment in foreign currency entails exchange risks. **EQUITIES:** Investments may be volatile and may fluctuate according to market conditions, the performance of individual companies and that of the broader equity market. **HEDGING:** Any hedging strategy using derivatives may not achieve a perfect hedge. **INVESTMENT IN CHINA:** Changes in Chinese political, social or economic policies or securities law and regulations may significantly affect the value of the Fund. Chinese securities may be subject to trading suspensions which could impact the Fund's investment strategy and affect performance. Chinese tax law is applied under policies that may change without notice and with retrospective effect. **MANAGER:** Investment performance depends on the investment management team and their investment strategies. If the strategies do not perform as expected, if opportunities to implement them do not arise, or if the team does not implement its investment strategies successfully; then a fund may underperform or experience losses. **SMALL AND MID-CAP COMPANY:** Small and mid-cap companies' valuations may be more volatile than those of large cap companies. They may also be less liquid. **SUSTAINABILITY:** A Sustainability Risk can be defined as an environmental, social or governance event or condition that, if it occurs, could

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cause an actual or potential material negative impact on the value of an investment.

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