

NMDP developed the Lil Miquela campaign in partnership with our agency partners, with the goal of engaging young adults 18–30 who may not have a personal experience with blood cancer and who may not be familiar with the easy process to join the NMDP Registry of volunteer blood stem cell donors. We worked with a team of real people with real expertise and real lived experiences to develop the concept and content, including patient-facing professionals, patients, caretakers and donors who have personally been impacted by blood stem cell transplant. Their real experiences, insights and personal testimonials inspired the content you see on Lil Miquela’s channels. Our goal with this campaign is to provide a platform and voice to patients and donors who are passionate about the life-saving potential of blood stem cell donation to inspire young people to join the registry to potentially save a life.

Meet our Creative Council:

A council of NMDP ambassadors comprising patients, caregivers, transplant recipients, blood stem cell donors, patient services coordinators and other medical professionals inspired Lil Miquela’s content and partnered with us to advise on the campaign creative, story lines and experiences. Meet them below:

Patients, Donors, Recipients

- Riley Heflin, blood stem cell transplant recipient and NMDP employee
- Courtney Addison, mother of searching patient, 8-year-old Cayden
- Manny Jay, blood stem cell transplant recipient
- Regina Windt, mother of blood stem cell transplant recipient, Baylee
- Emilee Mort, blood stem cell transplant recipient
- Noah Krause, blood stem cell and marrow donor
- Jared Lipscomb, blood stem cell transplant recipient

NMDP Patient-Facing Employees

- Katie Schoepner, Sr. Director Patient Services
- Dr. Heather Stefanski, VP Clinical Services and pediatric transplant physician
- Courtney Alleyne, blood stem cell donor and Patient Navigator

- Hailey Hassel, Principal Social Worker
- Megan Cody, Nurse Practitioner and Senior Manager, CIBMTR

Meet the NMDP Marketing Agency of Record:

Tombras

The ideation and creative production of Lil Miquela came from NMDP's marketing agency of record, Tombras. Tombras is a 3rd generation, family-owned full-service advertising agency based in Knoxville, TN with offices in New York, Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington DC and Buenos Aires. Founded in 1946, the agency is the largest family-owned agency in the U.S., and was recently named Ad Age's 2025 Agency of the year.

Tombras' tie to NMDP's mission is very strong and personal. Charlie Tombras, the current chairman of the Tombras Group, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2018 and was given only months to live, unless he had a successful blood stem cell transplant. Working with NMDP, his doctors found an ideal donor match from Poland. Over the course of 8 months, Tombras underwent 3 rounds of chemotherapy to get ready for his transplant with the cells from a 25-year-old woman. Because of his age (he was 78 at the time), and the situation he was in, he had less than a 25% chance for it to be successful. Three months after the surgery, his marrow biopsy showed no measurable leukemia in his body! In 2024, he had the opportunity to meet the woman who saved his life, Joanna, as well as her husband and daughter. He continues to share his story to help spur others to take action.

Meet Dapper, The Agency Behind Lil Miquela

Dapper Labs makes products that bring people together – to collect, connect, and play. Their mission is to build a world where everyone can own and get value from their data and digital assets – and where creators, developers, and the world's biggest brands can all build incredible new experiences for their communities. In 2021, Dapper acquired Brud, the media company that created Miquela Sousa, one of the first and most popular virtual influencers. Today, Lil Miquela is a 22-year-old virtual influencer, musician and digital activist with millions of fans.