



PEPPER POWER

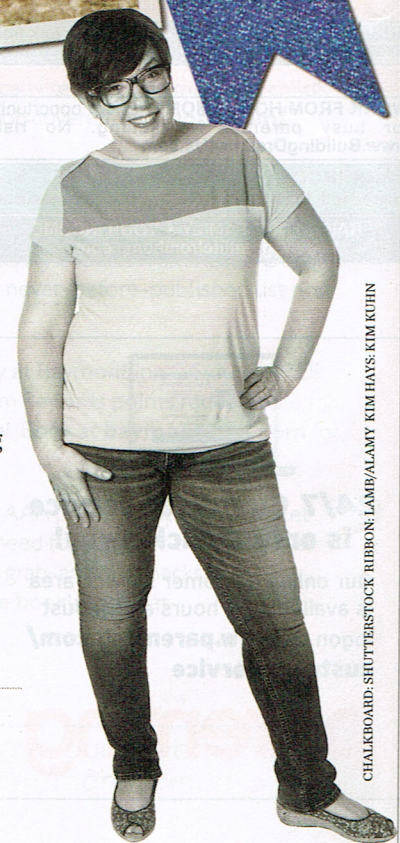
“I was that kid who was sent home with a note reading ‘Kim talks entirely too much.’

I was that kid throughout elementary school, except for one week. Every Monday, the students in my third-grade class started off with five “coins.” (Deductions were made for the usual misdeeds.) At week’s end, we could spend the coins on sparkly pencils, Slinkys, and other dime-store fare. Being a chatterbox, I was lucky to have

a single coin by Friday. Then one week the treasure bin featured this ah-mah-zing Dr. Pepper T-shirt. After clamming up for five days, I claimed my prize.

I called my mother recently and asked about that shirt. It was long gone, my mom told me, adding that she only kept the ‘special’ shirts. If she only knew.”

KIM HAYS is a deputy editor with *Parenting* and *Babytalk*. She still worries that she distracts people with her incessant babbling.



CHALKBOARD: SHUTTERSTOCK RIBBON: LAME/ALAMY KIM HAYS: KIM KUHN