

1998 Herman Goldstein Award
for
Excellence
in
Problem-Oriented Policing
Nomination



Los Angeles Police Department
Hollywood Area
Gang Crime Task Force

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**LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
HOLLYWOOD AREA
ABSTRACT**

I. SCANNING:

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Hollywood Area chose to address its gang-related activities based on the fact that a relatively small number of individuals were responsible for such a large portion of its problems. In 1995, there were nine recognized major gangs and seven semi-active gangs in the Hollywood Area, with 1,400 active estimated members.

II. ANALYSIS:

A review of Crime Analysis Detail (CAD) and Detective Activity Summary (DAS) statistics revealed that for a three-year period, Hollywood Area averaged 37.5 reported gang-related crimes each month. In 1995 there were 441 gang crimes, including 17 homicides; in 1996 there were 511 gang crimes, including 12 homicides; and in 1997 there were 398 total gang crimes reported, including 3 homicides.

Based on the analysis, it was apparent that current responses would have a greater impact on the problem if the programs and units worked in conjunction with each other and involved other agencies and organizations.

III. RESPONSE:

A committee consisting of community members and Department personnel worked to brainstorm the gang problem. As a result, the Hollywood Gang Crime Task Force was formulated to address a full spectrum approach to reduce gang crime, the fear of gang crime and quality of life issues in the Hollywood community. The Task Force was comprised of an augmented Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) Unit, CRASH detectives, an augmented CAD Unit, representatives from the District Attorney's Office and the Los Angeles County Probation Office, and members of the Jeopardy and Police Activities Leagues (PAL) youth programs. The Task Force worked to reduce gang activity through vigorous enforcement and prosecution, serving civil injunctions, identifying and arresting probation violators and referring at-risk youth to the Jeopardy and PAL youth programs.

IV. ASSESSMENT:

In March 1998, CRASH served civil injunctions against 47 Mara Salvatrucha gang members, **one** of the most active and violent gangs in the Hollywood Area. Over the last three years, there have been a total of 44 gang-related crimes, a reduction of 59 percent. In 1997, there were three gang homicides and through March 1998, there have been two gang homicides all of which five have been solved.

Overall crime in Hollywood Area has decreased by 31.5 percent since the implementation of the Gang Crime Task Force. The quality of life in Hollywood Area has been on a definite upswing, as evidenced by the drastic decrease in "cruising" along Hollywood Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard by gang members and a major reduction in community complaints regarding gang activity.

DESCRIPTION

The Hollywood Gang Crime Task Force as indicated in the following outline has addressed the four basic steps of the problem-solving model (SARA):

I. SCANNING:

Gang-related violence and crime has long been a problem plaguing large urban areas and the Hollywood Area is no exception. Law enforcement agencies, as well as schools, social service organizations, local community organizations and churches, to name a few, have all attempted to address the problem with varying degrees of success. Street gang activity has been recognized as having a negative impact on all aspects of life in communities where a strong gang presence is felt. Anywhere there is gang presence, community members become wary of venturing out onto the streets for fear of personal attack or becoming caught in the crossfire of a drive-by shooting. Community members are afraid of allowing their children to engage in the normal, everyday activity of playing outside on a sunny day. The youth of the area are enticed or intimidated into joining the local gang for self-preservation. The presence of gangs and the attendant problems they bring to a neighborhood are also accountable for a decrease in property values.

Hollywood Area chose to address its gang-related activities based on the fact that a relatively small number of individuals were responsible for such a large portion of its problems. Police officers, community members, councilmembers, media and crime analysis detail personnel, had identified the gang problems. In 1995, there were nine recognized major gangs and seven semi-active gangs in the Hollywood Area, with an estimated 1,400 active members.

II. ANALYSIS:

A review of Crime Analysis Detail (CAD) and Detective Activity Summary (DAS) statistics revealed that for a three-year period, Hollywood Area averaged 37.5 reported gang-related crimes each month. In 1995, there were 441 gang crimes, including 17 homicides; in 1996 there were 511 gang crimes, including 12 homicides; and in 1997 there were 398 total gang crimes reported, including three homicides (See attached Graph 1). These statistics reflected only the "reportable" gang-related crimes. Those crimes are:

- Homicide
- Attempt Murder
- Felony Assault
- Attacks on Police Officers
- Robbery
- Shots Fired Into Inhabited Dwellings
- **Kidnap**
- **Rape**
- **Arson**
- Witness Intimidation
- Extortion
- Carjacking

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The statistics did not reflect the other crimes committed by gang members such as burglary, grand theft auto, burglary from vehicle, vandalism, domestic violence and petty theft, nor could the statistics reflect the "fear of crime" in the neighborhoods controlled by the gangs. Other gang statistics revealed that 90 percent of gang members had been arrested at least once by the age of 18; 75 percent had been arrested twice; 95 percent had not finished high school; and 60 percent were dead or in state prison by the age of 20. Those percentages reinforced the belief that a direct correlation exists between illiteracy and crime and violence. The Mara Salvatrucha (MS) street gang was identified as one of the most active and violent gangs in the Area.

Prior to the implementation of the Hollywood Gang Task Force, each Hollywood patrol beat (known as a Basic Car) had been attempting to combat the problem individually. The Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) Unit had approximately ten uniformed officers and four detectives handling the above specific gang crimes, while also maintaining voluminous intelligence files. The Hollywood Jeopardy and Police Activities League (PAL) were in their infant stages, experiencing funding difficulties and just **beginning** to visualize their true potential. In early 1996, each of these groups was operating independent of each other.

The Jeopardy program is a gang prevention and intervention concept. It was designed to get the community youths back in school and keep them off the streets by giving them a

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higher sense of self-esteem and discipline. The program uses a six-prong approach to change the attitude and behavior of the pre-gang male and female adolescent:

- Identify "high-risk" juveniles through the combined resources of the community, school, and police department.
- The parents/guardians are notified of the child's possible gang activities. The family is brought together for an intake interview.
- The families are then referred to local community-based counseling agencies for individual or family counseling.
- The families are cited back to a monthly seminar during which factual information about the gang life style is disseminated. Parents and adolescents are also encouraged to attend monthly Jeopardy Support Groups.
- Each child selects an alternative activity. This activity fulfills their human needs, giving them an opportunity to reduce gang involvement.
- The children are monitored for one year on a monthly basis.

The Police Activities League (PAL) is a youth crime prevention program that relies on

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educational, athletic, and other recreational activities to cement a bond between police officers and the youth of the community. The PAL program is based on the strong belief that children, if they are reached early enough, can develop a strong, positive attitude toward police officers, become responsible adults and attain good citizenship qualities. The PAL program brings youngsters under the supervision and constructive influence of a responsible law enforcement agency and expands public awareness about the role of a police officer. The Hollywood PAL program began in 1995, with a "shoe-string" budget and just a few officers. It concentrated on providing an alternative to violence, gangs and drug involvement through sports activities.

From an analysis of the gang problem from 1995 to 1996, in addition to the overall crime statistics, it was apparent each of these entities were only having minor successes in their own programs. It was also apparent that they would have a greater impact on the problem if they worked in conjunction with each other, targeting "at risk" youths, as well as involving several other agencies and organizations, such as the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, the Los Angeles County Probation Department and members of the Hollywood community.

III. RESPONSE:

A committee consisting of detectives, CRASH officers and sergeants, CAD personnel and community members worked to brainstorm the gang problem. As a result, the Hollywood Gang Crime Task Force was instituted. It was to be comprised of an

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augmented CRASH Unit, CRASH detectives, an augmented CAD Unit, PAL and Jeopardy officers. It was to receive assistance from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Los Angeles County Probation Department and the PAL Board of Directors. It was formulated to address a full spectrum approach to reduce gang crime, the fear of gang crime and quality of life issues in the Hollywood community. In addition to targeting specific gangs and gang members, it was the intent of the Task Force to focus on the future potentiality of Hollywood youths in an effort to steer them away from the influence of neighborhood gangs; in effect reducing the recruitment pool for the gangs.

Under the direction of Captain Constance Dial, the Commanding Officer of Hollywood Area, the size of Hollywood CRASH unit was increased to 20 uniformed officers and 2 uniformed sergeants. A separate CRASH Detective Unit was formed with 8 detectives under the direction of Detective III Michael McDonagh. An additional change was to have the CRASH Detective Unit handle all crimes with identified gang members involved in order to increase their intelligence base and give the officers an opportunity to make contact with young gang members before they became involved in more serious crimes. With the assistance of the Deputy District Attorney, Hollywood instituted a Strategy Against Gang Environment (SAGE) program targeting MS gang members for civil injunctions.

Through the civil injunctions, specifically identified gang members are prohibited from engaging in the following activities within a proposed "safety zone":

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- Standing, sitting, walking, driving, or otherwise appearing anywhere in public view with one or more named defendants or known MS gang members, but not including when all individuals reside within a dwelling unit.
- Selling, possessing, or using, without a prescription, or knowingly remaining in the presence of anyone possessing, selling, or using, without a prescription, any controlled substance or related paraphernalia, including but not limited to, rolling papers and pipes used for illegal drug use.
- Blocking the free passage of any person or vehicle on any street, walkway, sidewalk, driveway, alley, or other area of public passage.
- Being present on the private property of others, except with the prior written consent of the owner or person in lawful possession of the property, or in the presence of and with the voluntary consent of the owner or person in lawful possession of the property.
- **If under** the age of 18, being in violation of the juvenile curfew ordinance between the hours of 8:00 p.m. on any day and sunrise of the following day.
- If 18 years of age or older, being in a public place between 10:00 p.m. on any day and sunrise of the following day, unless going to/from a legitimate meeting or

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entertainment activity, or actively engaged in some business, trade, profession or occupation which requires such presence, or involved in a legitimate emergency situation that requires immediate attention.

- Acting as a lookout, whistling, yelling or otherwise signaling with a flashlight, "walkie-talkie," or other means to warn another person of an approaching law enforcement officer, or soliciting, encouraging or employing another to do so.
- Confronting, intimidating, harassing, or threatening any person.
- Drinking any alcoholic beverage in any public place or any place open to public view, or knowingly being within 10 feet of an open container of alcohol in a public place or a place open to public view.
- Possessing any gun, ammunition, or illegal weapon as defined in California Penal Code Section 12020 in any public place or place open to public view or knowingly remaining in the presence of anyone who is in possession of such gun, ammunition or dangerous weapon.
- Damaging or defacing any public property or private property of another, or possessing any aerosol paint container, a felt tip marker, or any other marking substance as defined by California Penal Code section 594.2.

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- Approaching or signaling as a pedestrian any moving vehicle on any street unless a legitimate emergency situation exists.

Any violation of the stringent conditions set forth above would be punished as contempt of court.

A Los Angeles County probation officer was assigned to accompany CRASH officers on patrol and violate gang members' probation when they were found to be in violation of specific conditions of probation, whether or not any new open charges were applicable.

The goal of CRASH was to reduce the number of gang crimes through vigorous enforcement and prosecution, and to identify potential gang members and "at risk" youths and refer them to the Jeopardy and PAL programs.

With the advent of the Hollywood Gang Crime Task Force, the Jeopardy and PAL programs were redesigned to work more closely with each other, since they were both **trying to reach** the same goal of expanding the number of activities made available to community youths, as well as increase the number of individual youths involved. The number of police personnel assigned to each was increased, as well as civilian volunteers.

Sizable donations were obtained to help with the programs through the assistance of Fares Wehbe, President, Hollywood PAL Board of Directors and the PAL Board of Directors.

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In looking for additional community assistance, Hollywood PAL collaborated with the Los Angeles Bridges afterschool program and the Salvation Army Weingart Youth Center to set up a 22-week program targeting specific "high-risk" youths at Le Conte middle school. The participants were selected based on age and personal problems. This program concentrated on offering the youths counseling and educational classes.

In November 1996, the Hollywood Education and Literacy Project (H.E.L.P.) was established through a grant obtained by Kinder Hunt, President of H.E.L.P., and Lieutenant Ronald Sanchez, Commanding Officer, Hollywood Detective Division. The H.E.L.P. program is a model tutoring/mentoring facility that works hand in hand with the PAL and Jeopardy programs. Where PAL and Jeopardy mainly work with kids in athletics and other recreational activities, and the Los Angeles Bridges afterschool program targeted Le Conte middle school, H.E.L.P. collaborates with those programs and offers a full educational training program for both the mentor/tutor and the student throughout Hollywood Area. Through the H.E.L.P. project, the mentor/tutor learns:

- How to work with a student and obtain cooperation from him/her.
- How to maintain a caring and friendly attitude while still moving forward swiftly in the student's program.

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- How to spot and overcome a student/youth in trouble.
- A codified system which gives a guideline for working with a student intensively but allowing his/her personal growth to occur.
- An organizational system to accurately account for the activities that are occurring.
- Internships are an integral part of the system. This is where the mentor gains certainty in his/her abilities to truly help the student.

The student receives:

- A full battery of tests that give results for outcome surveys.
- A full personal interview which allows the mentor to focus in on the youth's areas of trouble as well as strengths. It also gives an insight into the student's primary areas of interest as well as the student's existing willingness or desire to improve.
- A full understanding of primary educational words and concepts.
- A step^by-step literacy program where phonics tutoring is applied. This can be

administered by anyone (no teaching or tutoring background is required) to an illiterate or semi-literate person. This is highly effective and is a common sense approach to helping another learn.

- Study and learning skills. The student is able to overcome the primary barriers to learning and actually learns how to learn.
- Math tutoring. This is given with full demonstration for practical understanding.
- Job readiness skills. Students are helped to obtain employment in their area of interest. They are worked with on everything from filling out employment applications and dress to maintaining their job and career advancement.

The four programs, PAL, Jeopardy, Los Angeles Bridges and H.E.L.P., working together with the augmented CRASH Unit make a powerful weapon against the uncertainty of life in a gang.

IV. ASSESSMENT:

In March 1998, CRASH served civil injunctions against 47 MS gang members. Gang-related crimes involving the MS street gang have become virtually non-existent. Through March 1998, there have been a total of 44 gang-related crimes, which is an average of 14.6 per month, for a reduction of 59.4 percent over the last three years. In 1997, there

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were three gang homicides; and through March 1998, there were two gang homicides. All five of these murders have been solved, some with the help of ex-gang members.

Jeopardy instituted a Gang Awareness Program in the community and has increased the number of individuals involved in their activities. Both PAL and Jeopardy now have six after school programs:

- The Hollywood Little Red School House offers swimming, gymnastics, arts and crafts, a basketball program and computer training.
- The Los Angeles Bridges program offers counseling and educational classes.
- The Salvation Army Weingart Youth Center maintains a computer lab and also sponsors karate instruction that is provided by off-duty police officers.
- The Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks has a soccer program coached by community members and off-duty officers.
- The Boys and Girls Club provides a computer lab, a bike and hardware workshop that assists with job training, and a boxing program.

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- The Yucca Center provides a basketball program and the Los Angeles Kings are sponsoring a street hockey league.

Members of Hollywood PAL participate in California PAL-sponsored tournaments throughout the year, in events such as soccer, basketball, karate, etc. They also participate in California PAL-sponsored field trips to Big Bear and San Diego. The membership of the Hollywood PAL and Jeopardy programs have grown from 200 active youths in December 1997 to 375 active members as of March 1998. This reflects an **increase of 87.5 percent** and is directly attributable to the generous donations obtained by Fares Wehbe, President, Hollywood PAL, Board of Directors and the hard work of the PAL and Jeopardy police officers and volunteers.

Since the inception of the H.E.L.P. project in November 1996, 700 individuals have completed the program. This includes many parents/guardians who found that they could also benefit from its services.

As seen by the attached graphs, since 1995 the monthly average of gang-related crime in Hollywood has decreased by **59.4 percent** (Graph 1), Part One crimes have decreased by **42.6 percent** (Graph 2), overall crime has decreased by **31.5 percent** (Graph 3), and the number of juveniles arrested for 602 Welfare and Institutions Code offenses has decreased by **26 percent** (Graph 4). The quality of life in Hollywood Area has been on a definite upswing, as evidenced by the drastic decrease in "cruising" along Hollywood

Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard by gang members and a major reduction in community complaints regarding graffiti and other gang-related activity. **By anyone's measure, the Hollywood Gang Crime Task Force is a great success and a shining example of what the police and the community can accomplish when working toward a common goal together.**

V. AGENCY & OFFICER INFORMATION:

This project was adopted at the Area level under the direction of Captain Constance Dial, Commanding Officer, Hollywood Area Community Police Station.

Hollywood CRASH personnel received additional training in gang-related documentation, building searches and warrant service.

The CRASH office is now equipped with dedicated desktop and laptop computers, a digital camera and a photographic scanner, as a result of donations obtained through the *Hollywood Sign* Trust. These devices will ultimately allow intelligence gathered by the CRASH Unit to be uploaded to the California Gang Tracking System where it will be easily accessible to gang officers statewide.

Through the auspices of Fares Wehbe, President, Hollywood PAL, Board of Directors, the PAL and Jeopardy programs raised donations in excess of \$135,000 to fund youth programs.

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The prior SAGE program instituted at Los Angeles Police Department, Rampart Area was a tremendous help during this project.

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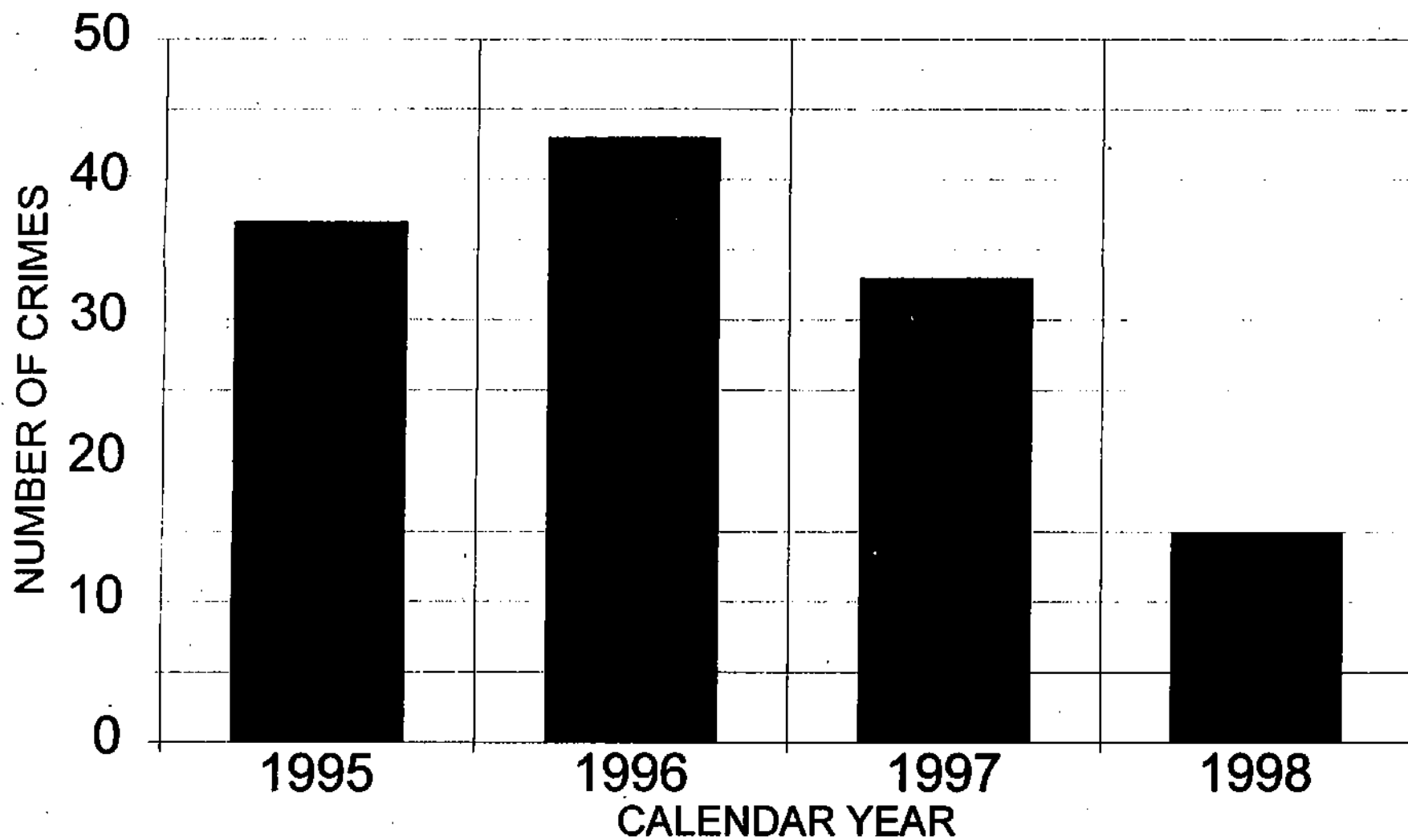
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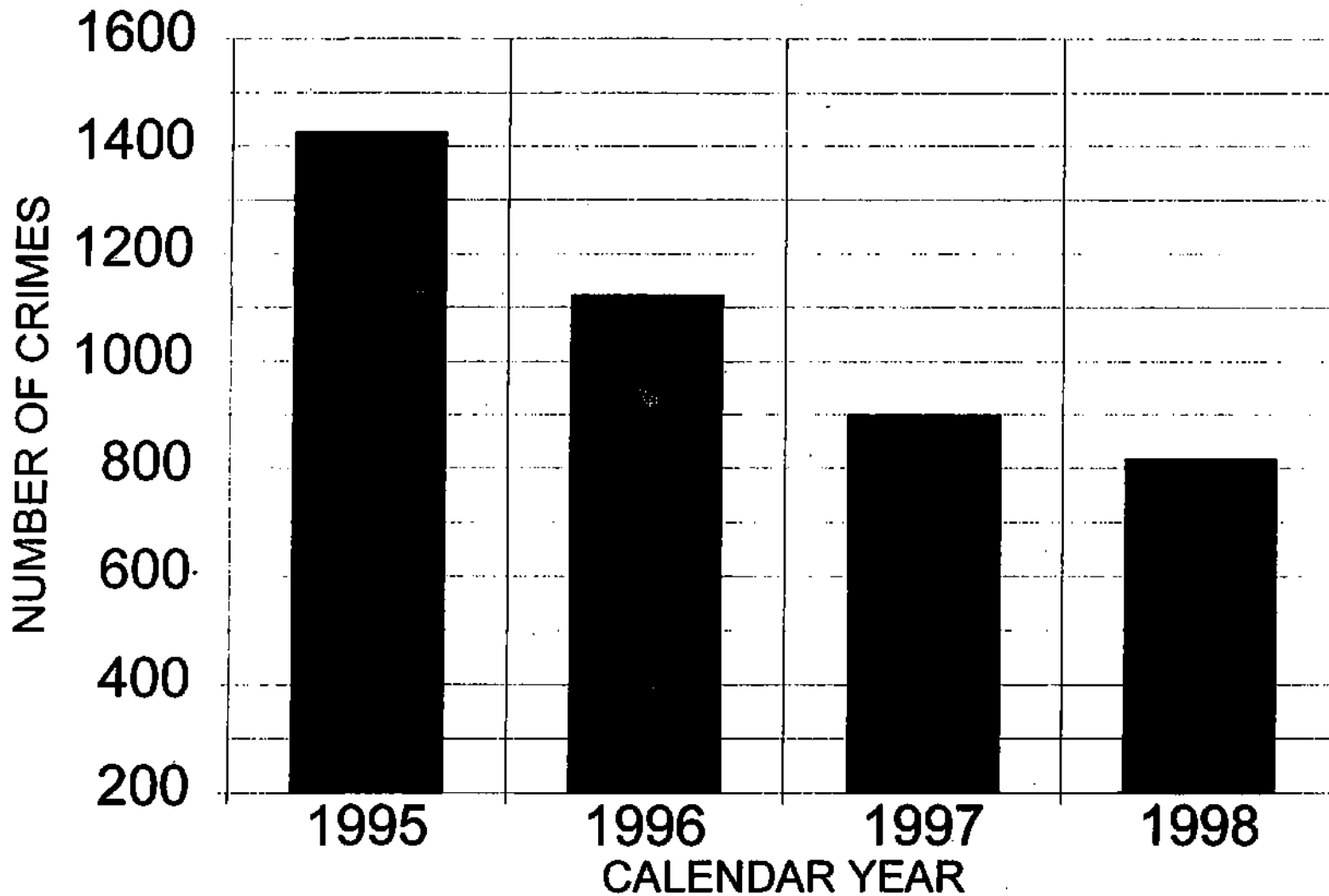
GANG CRIMES: MONTHLY AVERAGE

1995 - 1998



PART-1 CRIMES: MONTHLY AVERAGE

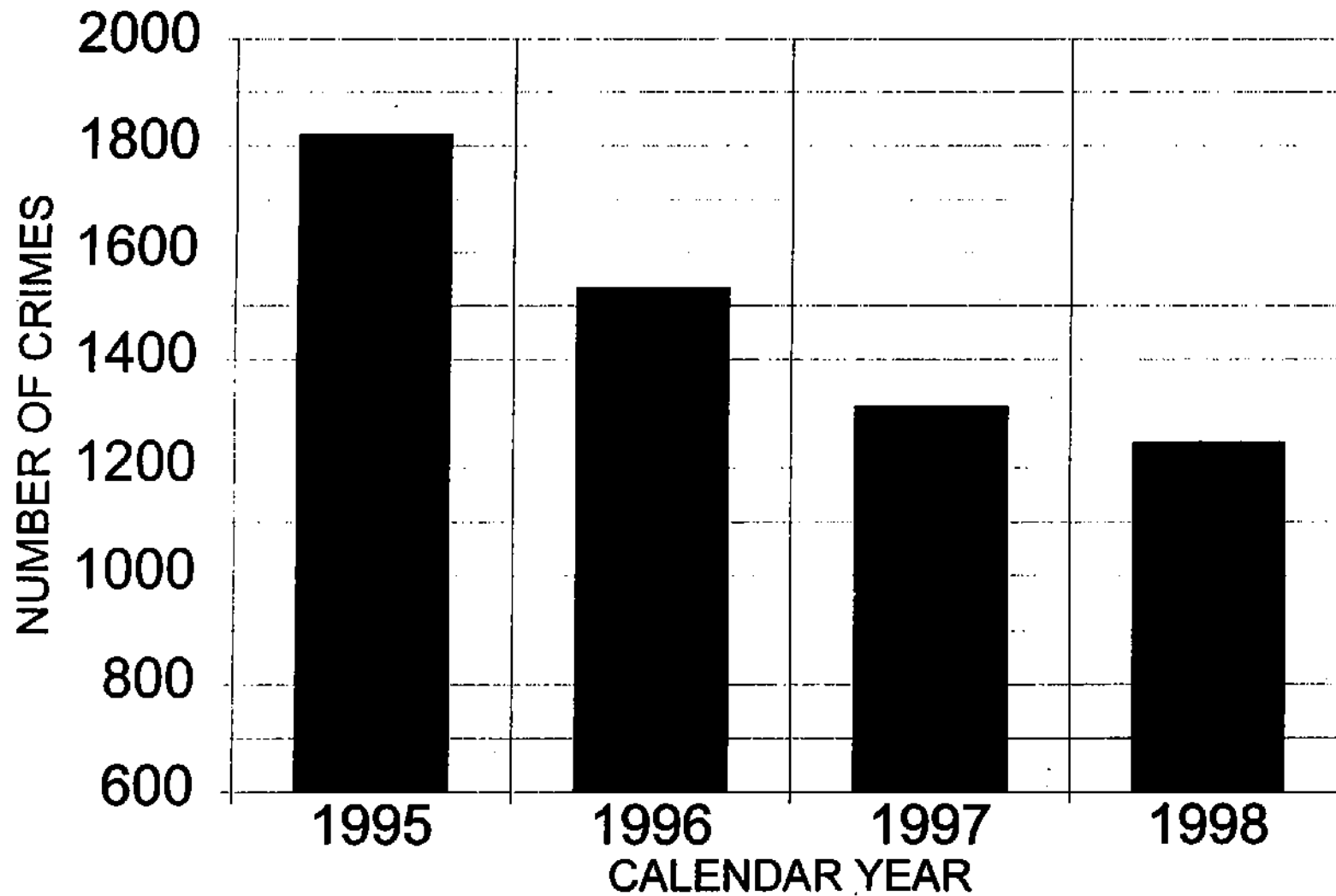
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GRAPH-3

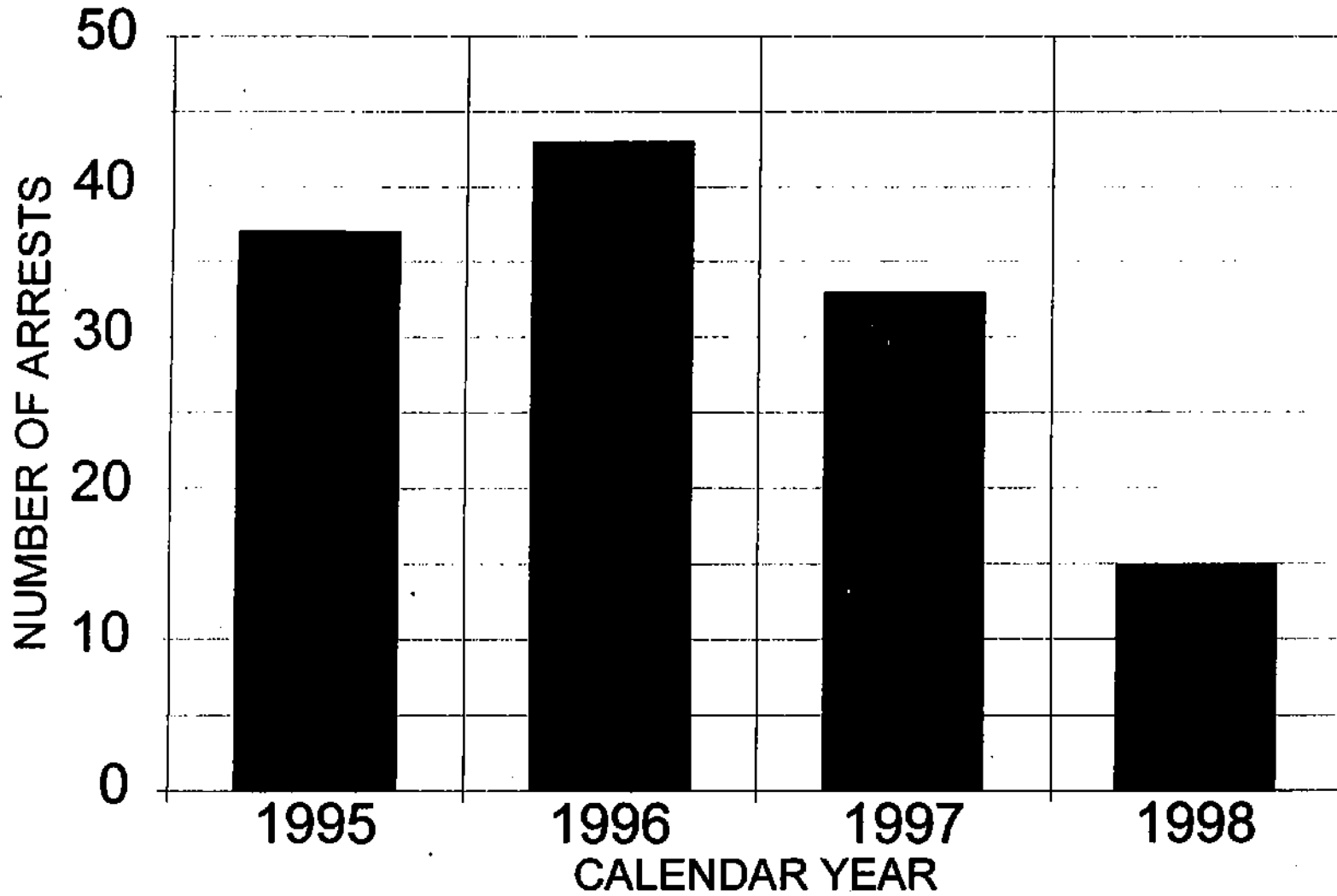
TOTAL CRIMES: MONTHLY AVERAGE

1995 - 1998



JUVENILE 602 ARRESTS: MONTHLY AVERAGE

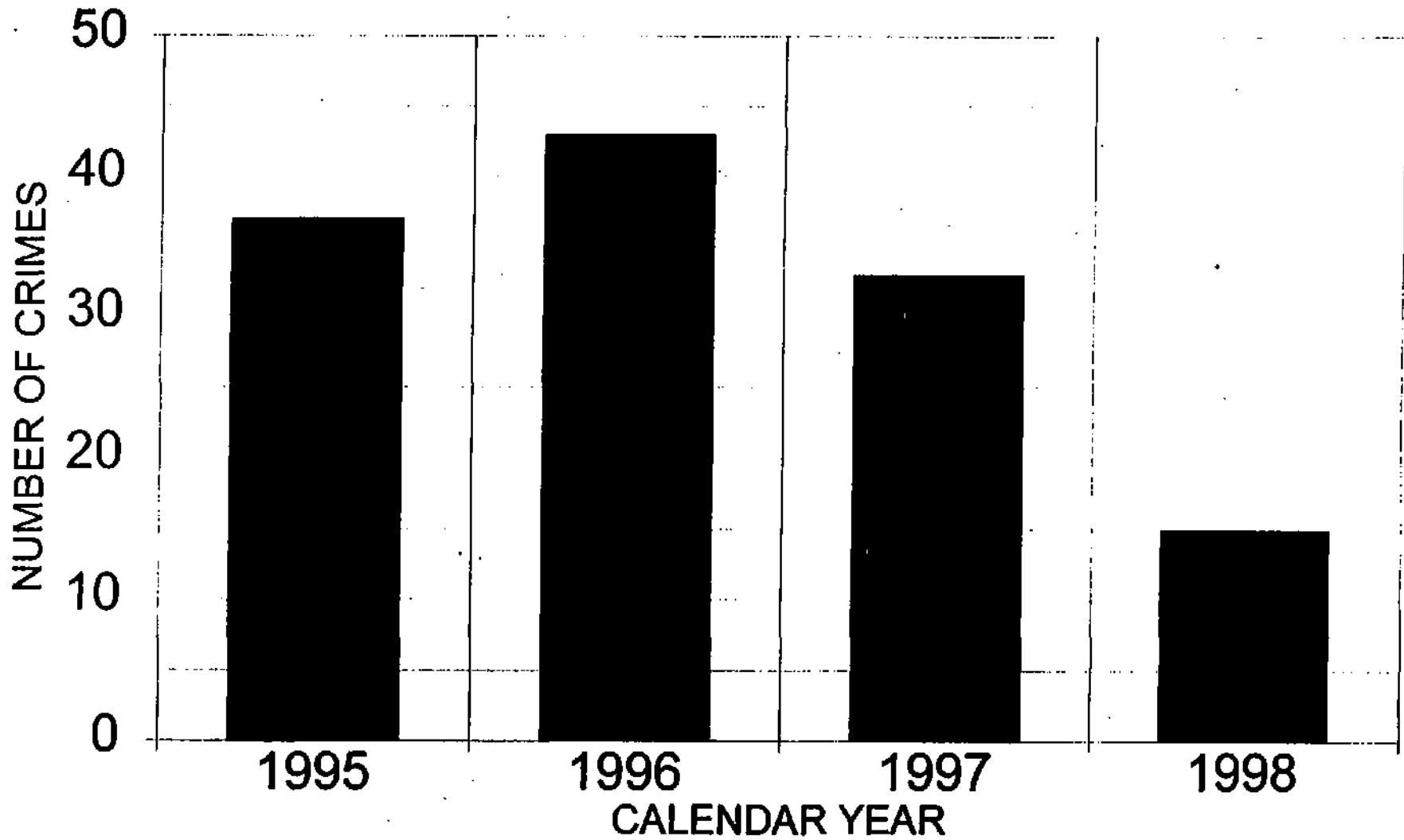
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GRAPH-1

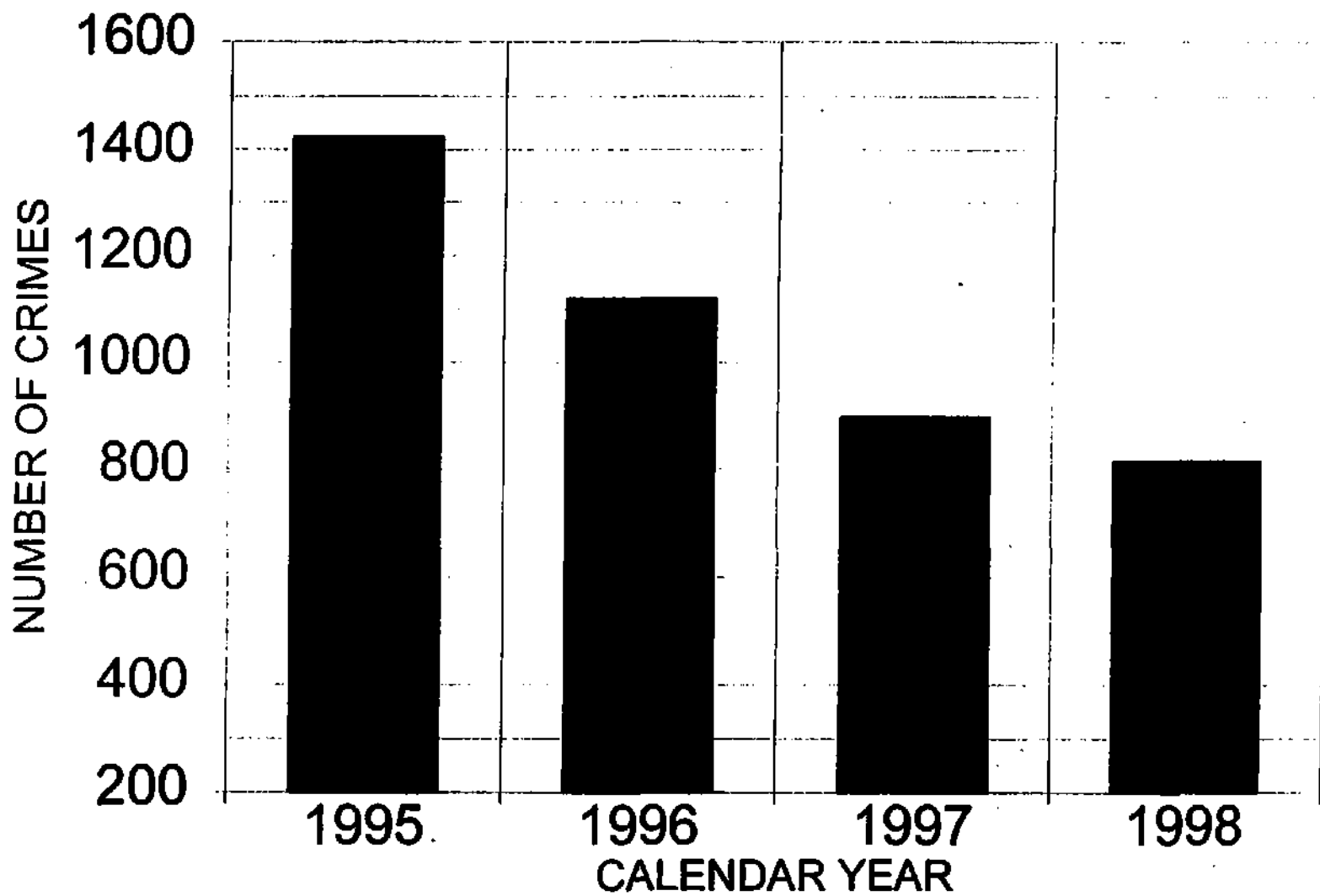
GANG CRIMES: MONTHLY AVERAGE

1995 - 1998



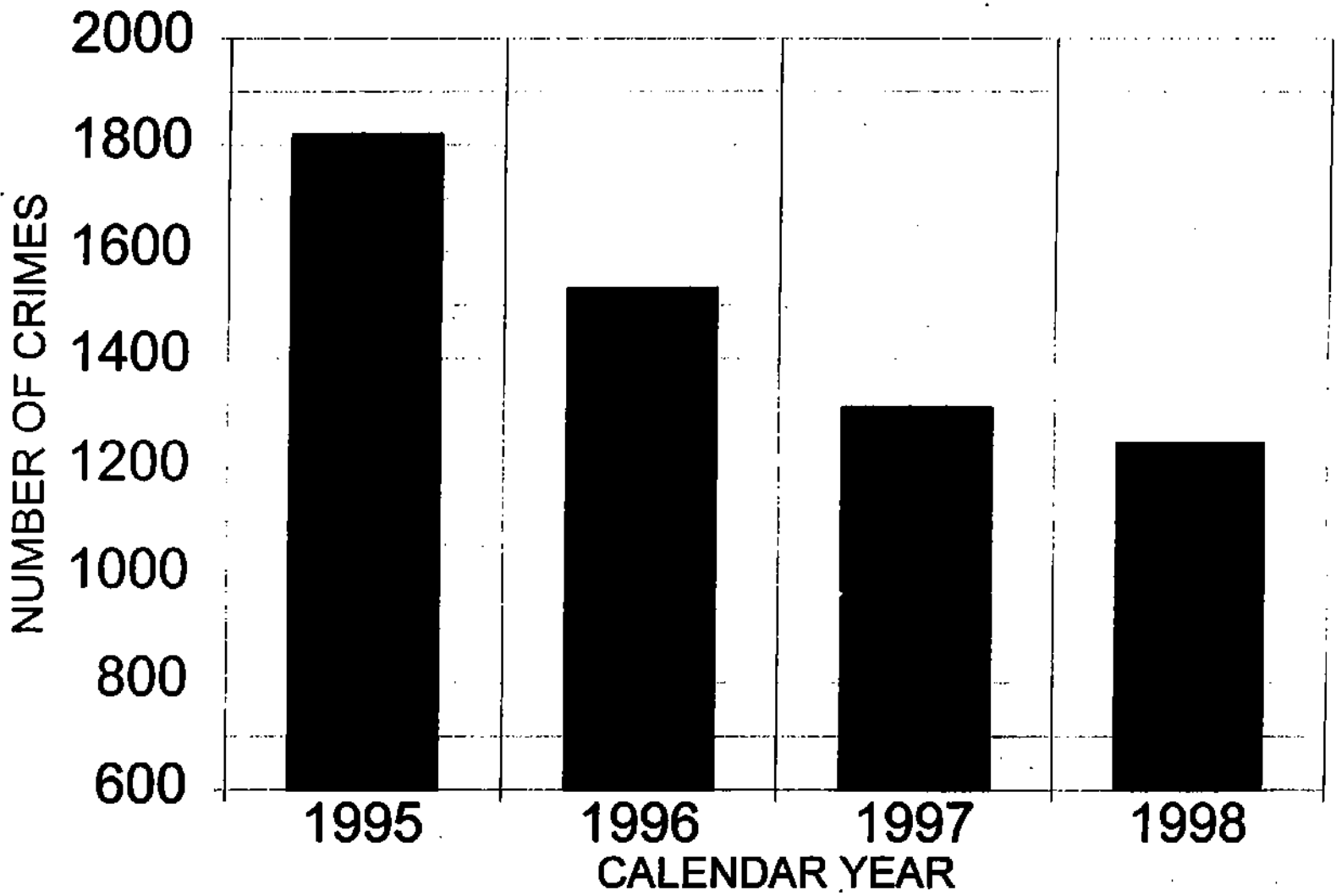
PART-1 CRIMES: MONTHLY AVERAGE

1995 - 1998



GRAPH-3

TOTAL CRIMES: MONTHLY AVERAGE
1995 - 1998



JUVENILE 602 ARRESTS: MONTHLY AVERAGE 1995 - 1998

